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THE YELLOW MAN LOOKS ON





# THE YELLOW MAN LOOKS ON

*Being the Story of the Anglo-Dutch  
Conflict in Southern Africa and its  
Interest for the Peoples of Asia*

By

HEDLEY A. CHILVERS

*Author of "Out of the Crucible" and "The Seven Lost Trails of Africa"*

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
SIR ABE BAILEY, BART.



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DEDICATED  
TO MY FATHER



## FOREWORD

I AM glad to be able to write a foreword for this book, particularly as its aim is to trace the causes of the prolonged Anglo-Dutch quarrel in South Africa, and to advance reasons why that quarrel must cease, why the co-operative spirit now represented in 1933 by a coalition Government should prevail, and why the two white races of South Africa must henceforth work together.

My own attitude towards racialism in South Africa is, I venture to say, pretty well known. From the outset of my political career as a member of the old Cape House of Assembly and of the Transvaal and Union Parliaments of South Africa, I have fought racialism strenuously in Parliament and Press, realizing that it can only bring material and moral disaster to the people of the Union, perhaps even death to the nation. And if death be deemed a strong word, let it be remembered that that old alchemist Time is a worker of miracles. Death may come to Southern Africa, taking a long view, through a land-hungry nation such as the Japanese.

In this book Mr. Chilvers has dealt tactfully with a difficult and contentious theme. He has traced the race difficulties that have arisen out of that much-discussed historical affair of Slagsters Nek; out of the overbearing attitude of the British Colonial Office towards the Frontier colonists in 1835, an attitude which led to the *Voortrekker* movement; out of the disputes concerning the ownership of the diamond fields in the 'sixties; out of the first and second Anglo-Boer Wars; and

the racial repercussions following the discovery of the Rand goldfields. In making free use of anecdote in these matters, in stressing the lighter side in conjunction with the deeper, he has tried—and I think with quite remarkable success—to present the controversial facts of history in a fashion not likely to give offence. There is a pleasant and unpleasant way of stating facts. Mr. Chilvers has chosen the better way. He is doing brilliant work for South Africa.

I concur with the author's view that the Yellow man is watching events in South Africa with interest, and feel that some important considerations are to be noted in connexion with that submission. The first is, that Southern Africa is one of the treasure houses of the world. It has the largest goldfield on earth, with an unmined content of perhaps 2,000 million pounds or more at a guess; it has immense diamond resources; it can produce copper more cheaply than any other country; and above all it has vast reserves of coal, iron and other base minerals which the East so sorely needs. There is of course the further consideration that the African high veld has a lower population pressure than that of any other richly mineralized country on the globe!

Japan, clever, trained, resolute, can hardly fail, therefore, to be attracted by Central and Southern Africa. To expect that Manchukuo—already overcrowded—or the old Japanese Empire which is capable of very little more industrial expansion, will solve Japan's tremendous population problem is the sheerest folly.

Moreover, to believe that Australia, subject as she is to prolonged droughts and consequent infertility in respect of a large portion of her territory, will provide a solution to that population problem, is equally fallacious. The hard pressure of economic facts has compelled Japan to say:

"We must have more land for settlement. If we don't get it, we shall perish. Far better to die fighting than by starvation!"

The Yellow Peril, as it was once called, is one of the best arguments for the maintenance of the Union's connexion with the British Commonwealth of Nations. If the white races in Southern Africa can only agree to work together, as, fortunately, they have been trying to do under the 1933 Hertzog Coalition Government; if they recognize the benefit of remaining within the Commonwealth of Nations, they will continue to enjoy the protection of the British Navy. On the other hand, any extreme Nationalist movement which succeeds in destroying the link with the Commonwealth will weaken its claim to that protection, though whether it would ever come to actual forfeiture at a time of crisis is another matter. Southern Africa has an enormous coastline. She must protect herself. She has no real Navy of her own. She is, therefore, extremely vulnerable to attack from a powerful foe.

These ideas are in the realm of contingency. They may never eventuate; but they should certainly never be overlooked. After all, who can say what may happen in the course of a decade or two? Africa may be the cock-pit where the fight between the East and West will take place. Japan, heedless of the world and with her new responsibilities in China, is increasing her armed forces. Japan, indeed, is becoming an aggressive military menace to the peace of the world. Time is annihilating distance: overturning all forms of convention. We in South Africa must widen our horizons lest perhaps one day the Japanese taking advantage of our disorder reduce our towns to smouldering ruins.

For these reasons I feel sure that Mr. Chilvers has been anything but fanciful in drawing atten-



tion to the potential menace from the East. On the other hand, one can only hope that the blessing of peace and the folly of war will become more apparent to international statesmen as time goes on.

For, let me again emphasize it: Time and the boundaries of terrestrial space are being annihilated, the nations are being brought physically closer, the Earth is fast becoming a world state, and the nations so many provinces intimately dependent on one another.

If South Africans—British and Dutch—can but reconcile their differences, their example may yet serve a useful purpose in the wider field of race relations and international peace.

ABE BAILEY.

*Muizenberg,  
South Africa.*

## PREFACE

THIS book is a record of a hundred years of strife—written in the cause of peace. It attempts to state the case for a permanent peace as between British and Dutch in Southern Africa; and, in describing the havoc wrought by a century of conflict, to submit *de facto* an overwhelming argument for a peace based on mutual recognition of rights.

The quarrel is deeply seated. The spirit of it is still active. It is a conflict between two ideals represented respectively by Kruger and Rhodes—the one aiming at a Dutch hegemony, the other standing for British Imperialism. Through its countless ramifications it has literally shaken the world. It has shaken Africa and is still affecting the politics of the Union. That it must now cease is abundantly clear. If it does not, if we in South Africa fail to reconcile our differences and become one in sentiment, then we or those who will follow, must eventually stand disarmed and at the mercy of the yellow races of the East. The argument bearing upon this will be found developed in the last chapters of this work. It may perhaps prove the more convincing if considered in the light of the vast changes which hang upon time and the operation of economic laws.

In order that the narrative may break new ground and exert popular appeal, I have made free use of anecdote obtained for the most part from the old people of the Union. This has entailed long and persistent research but has been well worth while. Anecdote, indeed, if used artistically

would seem to throw high-lights on the canvas of history, giving value and depth to distance and realism to the whole.

Moreover, the passing of the old people of Africa is a tragedy; so that it is a privilege to make some attempt to perpetuate their adventures. Their lives for the most part are a homily on the need of peace.

And peace is the purpose of this book.

HEDLEY A. CHILVERS.

*Johannesburg,  
July, 1933.*

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# THE YELLOW MAN LOOKS ON

## CHAPTER I

### THE BROKEN GALLOWS ROPE

#### I

THE gallows rose in the yellow glare of the afternoon. It had been erected close to Andrew's Post on the Fish River, Cape Border, where the five condemned men and sixty confederates had lately sworn the rebel oath. The black cross-beam from which they were now to hang and the under-bench or fall on which they were to stand, were sinister details in a savage landscape.

The hanging took place on March 9, 1816, eight months after Waterloo. Under the gibbet stood the thin-lipped Landdrosts, Cuyler and Stockenstroom, whose three hundred men in uniforms of green and black guarded the sixteen bearded rebels who had been sentenced to witness the execution.

The condemned sang a hymn. Their harsh voices beat like drums on the air. In the ensuing silence the prisoner Stephanus Bothma was heard to say: "Be cautious, people, of your ways, and take warning by my fate!"

The hangman now saw to it that the five men were in position. With a quick movement, he jerked the drop from below, when, to the general consternation, the ropes broke and the men

tumbled to the ground. Only one remained hanging. The others struggled to their feet. One staggered towards the judicial commissioners. Terrified spectators rushed to Cuyler beseeching him to stop the proceedings, but this, of course, he had no power to do.

Somehow the magistrate managed to complete the execution, but the effect of the bungling of his hangman who had failed to bring enough rope from George, two hundred and fifty miles away, whence he had transported the gallows by waggon, did not end with that shocking scene; it had momentous consequences. Spurious history which as a result became the currency of belief excited race-hatred for a hundred years, notwithstanding that race relations were not involved and that English officials had played little or no part in the tragedy. The truth was that the condemned rebels had been guilty of an atrocious plot to provoke a native rising and a cruel massacre of all settlers not in sympathy with their objects, and though they had been *arrested by Anglo-Dutch forces, they had been prosecuted, tried and sentenced by Dutchmen, and hanged under the supervision of a Dutch magistrate. The British Governor of the Cape, Lord Somerset, had intervened merely to pardon one of them, and had mitigated the sentences of the rest.*

## 2

What, then, is the truth about Slagters Nek? How did the rebellion originate? Who suppressed it? The story has been incorrectly told by Dr. Theal, the South African historian, and to him must be attributed some at least of the misapprehension which has since arisen. Had Dr. Theal—essentially an honest man—been able to make a close study of the Liebbrandt papers, recognized towards the end of the last century as

the long-lost records of the trial and hanging of the rebels at Slagters Nek, his story would have been different. These, however, are the facts:

In 1814 there lived on the Cape Frontier at Baviaans (Baboons) River the farmer Frederick Bezuidenhout. He quarrelled with an unsatisfactory servant and was summoned to appear before various magistrates, notably before Andries Stockenstroom; but repeatedly refused to obey. One day, therefore, a mixed force set out for his farm consisting of Lieutenant Rousseau, a Dutchman, Johannes Londt, under-bailiff, also a Dutchman, Lieutenant Mackay, a Scotsman, a sergeant, and fourteen men. Bezuidenhout warned his coloured concubine<sup>1</sup> to keep a look-out for them and swore not to be taken alive. A servant saw the little force topping a rise. Bezuidenhout became excited and ran with his gun into a dung kraal. He fired at 200 yards from behind the walls; then, as the soldiers returning his fire deployed and continued to advance, he hurriedly crossed the Baviaans River with his servant and prepared to fight to the death. He took refuge in a cave. For three hours he stubbornly fired and kept the besiegers at bay.

"Old Frederick," shouted the officers, "come out!"

"I'll be damned if I do," he roared. "I'll be hanged, anyway, for this."

At last a sergeant climbed up close to the cave.

"Let me come in and talk?" he pleaded.

"Keep away."

Desultory dialogue was abruptly terminated by the old farmer who refused to parley longer. The soldiers closed in.

"Master, let us go out," whimpered the coloured servant. But a stone thumped down on the outlaw's forehead. He got up and levelled his gun, at

<sup>1</sup> The term used in the Liebbrandt papers.



the same time preparing to retreat behind a boulder. A shot struck his left arm, penetrating his chest.

"Boy! My arm is off!" he cried, and fell dead.

At the funeral, Johannes Bezuidenhout, his brother, swore: "If I have to wait ten years I'll be avenged for this!"

## 3

There had been troublous times in that region. Danger had constantly threatened the border men. In 1811—five years before the Slagters Nek execution—thirty-nine border farms had been attacked and pillaged by kaffirs, several farmers murdered, and a loss sustained of 1,205 cattle and horses. Terrible tales were whispered in the homesteads. Jacob de Winter had gone out one day to graze his cattle at Van Aardt's Post, fifteen miles from Slagters Nek. His dog had returned alone. Search parties discovered him dead in the morning, tied to a tree and covered with assegai wounds. At Zwart Ruggens a band of native robbers led by the ex-convict David Stuurman, just escaped from Robben Island, had appeared in the night. They surrounded the homestead of the brothers Slabbert, killed them and stole their cattle. The terrified women and children fled in the darkness to the house of a relative. Shortly before this, the venerable old Jan Davel and his two Hottentot "herds" had been murdered and 120 cattle stolen.

Yes, the times were indeed difficult. Landdrost Stockenstroom, writing to Lord Caledon from Baviaans River, deplored the weakness of the Government. Captain Hawkes, too, complained to Landdrost Cuyler from lonely Brintjes Hoogte that, "the country is on every side overrun with kaffirs . . . their depredations of late

exceed all precedent . . . unless decisive measures are immediately adopted I apprehend the most serious consequences." Fortunately Sir John Cradock had come to the Cape as Governor in 1811 fresh from wide experience of the Peninsula wars and riot-quelling in India and Ireland; and he soon got to work. By March, 1812, he had cleared the Eastern Province of native marauders and had given them a salutary lesson. But the great chief Hintza—said to be a black replica of King George the Third—and Gaika and Ndhlabi, remained restive; at any time their assegais and burning brands might flash over the border.

It was in such a dangerous atmosphere that the Slagters Nek rebels, angered by the shooting of Bezuidenhout in the cave, had taken their deplorable steps to incite the blacks to rise against the whites.

## 4

The border country was hilly and savage. There were vertical cliffs, bush-covered gorges, forests full of big baboons, and stony ridges and waterfalls. In this country dwelt Johannes Bezuidenhout, brother of the dead Frederick, primitive, untameable, hostile to the law. He was one of a strange frontier company. One of them, Stephanus Bothma, had been sentenced by a Dutch Court to stand in a public place with the word "forger" placarded on his breast. Another was the rebel son of a rebel father who had been sentenced to death. The Dutch judges who subsequently tried the rebels, said of them:

"The chief conspirators own no land. They wander about with their cattle. They have no oppressive burdens, so that their dissatisfaction must be sought in malice . . . to which must be added that most of them having grown up in an

almost savage state and without education, have with difficulty been able to accustom themselves to discipline."

One day a troop of these wild men rode over the frontier. They clattered into the bush-covered territory of the kaffirs, with rounded kraals on commanding sites, overlooking misty blue valleys. Notwithstanding that it was contrary to law for white men to go there, Cornelius Faber, Stephanus Bothma, and others rode to the kraal of the Chief Gaika, who sent for his counsellors to hear what they had to say.

"I've been sent by the people of Baviaans River, of Graaff Reinet and by all in the Cape," the man Faber began, "to get you to help us to drive the English into the sea. If you fight you'll get cattle and land; if you don't. . . ."

The chief was cautious—but interested. "Will many white men join you in the fight?" he asked.

"All our people—and six hundred Hollanders."

"Have you chosen your field cornets?"

"Not all."

"But you should have done that," the chief said, as if disappointed; then added naïvely: "Perhaps it would be better for the white men to fight first, so that our people could come in afterwards."

As the discussion proceeded, Faber constantly urged Gaika to persuade Chief Hintza, a much more powerful native potentate, to revolt: and Gaika gave half-hearted assent, whereupon Faber and his confederates rode back through the hills to ascertain how the mobilization of their own rebel commando was proceeding. He subsequently returned to Gaika with the assurance that the white men were assembling on the upper side of the Roodeval near Slagters Nek.

"Join us at once," he urged, "there is no time to be lost. Bring your captains Kemo and Jalousa."

But Gaika had made up his mind. He saw much danger ahead and little profit.

"You may ride back and fight," he now told Faber. "But I have no orders from the Great White King."

And thus did the wily old chief dismiss the emissaries of revolt.

## 5

Faber and his companions got back through the pass. They saw high up on a stony hillside their own rebel commando with the white-haired Landdrost Krugel, the embittered Johannes Bezuidenhout and the desperate de Klerck among them. Krugel seemed agitated: and little wonder, for facing them was a hostile Government commando of burghers and dragoons. A clash seemed imminent, even though a loyalist Boer, Henrik Lange, was climbing the mountain at that moment to persuade the rebels to surrender. As he approached they crowded around.

"I'll have nothing to say to anybody but the leaders," he shouted, and waved them back.

"We will come down and surrender," Krugel cried on the verge of tears, "if we get a general pardon."

"I'll be damned if I surrender," broke in Theunis de Klerck, "if we do, we're dead men!"

Then Krugel began to lament: "What shall we do? Where shall we go? We are lost!"

At this critical moment, by the light of the setting sun, Faber and his horsemen from Kaffirland came struggling up the mountain side.

"The kaffirs won't fight!" he announced.

There was consternation then, Krugel and other waverers stumbling down the slopes in their anxiety to surrender. Krugel threw himself on his knees in front of the Government commando.

"Let me take my punishment!" he cried.

He was arrested with others. The rest galloped away, and profiting from the confusion, escaped.

## 6

But they were pursued. Landdrost Stockenstroom, Captain Harding and fifty men tracked them into the Winterberg, where they shut them in a kloof and blocked it. Seeing but unseen they counted the rebel waggons, horses, cattle and sheep. And while they were counting came a bit of unhearsed drama. Two of the worst of the outlaws came forth deep in earnest talk—Cornelius Faber armed and on horseback, and Stephanus Bothma on foot and unarmed. The pair moved down the banks of the stream which rippled out of the gorge, straight into the ambush. Armed men awaited them in the river-bed. When the outlaws got near enough, the soldiers jumped up.

"Stand or I fire!" cried Ensign Mackay.

The startled couple instantly dashed back towards the gorge. Faber dismounted and stamped his horse into the rocks. He levelled his gun: but a bullet tore through his shoulder and he fell. Bothma was chased up the mountain into a cave and caught.

Johannes Bezuidenhout, hearing the shots, must have felt as his brother had felt when trapped in the cave, that his hour had come. With him were his wife and son. He rode gently towards a little kloof where the soldiers were stationed. His wife and son went on foot. He heard an officer farther down the gorge shouting to them to surrender—an officer who kept his hat over his gun in token of truce. Bezuidenhout made suddenly as if to gallop off.

"Will you leave us?" his wife implored, and rather shamefacedly he dismounted and went with

her behind his waggon preparing to fire: and as the approaching soldiers deployed, one having his rifle levelled, he fired, mortally wounding the man.

The troops, enraged at this and seeing Bezuidenhout's wife loading muskets, fired heavily upon them. They shot the gun out of his hand, and as he seized another, shot him in the elbow, then, as he attempted to fly, in the back. Bezuidenhout turned to his son and exhorted him to go to the troops and give himself up. "They will not harm you," he gasped.

At sunset he died. In the waggons were found ten muskets and rifles, a bag of bullets and slugs, pigs of lead, eight ox horns of gunpowder, four other horns and belts all full, and forty to fifty pounds of gunpowder in knapsacks.

## 7

The trial court presided over by Commissioners F. Diemal and W. Hiddingh, with G. Beelaarts Van Blokland, as secretary—all Dutchmen—sentenced to death William Krugel (later reprieved and pardoned), Theunis de Klerck, Cornelius Faber, Hendrik Prinsloo, Stephanus Bothma, and Abraham C. Bothma.

An obelisk to their memory stands to-day on the site of the gallows. Lord Somerset—never very closely in touch with native ways—ordered that Gaika be given presents for declining to join the rebels. Cuyler bought eleven highly coloured prints, one each for Gaika's wives. He accompanied a bundle of trifles with some plain speaking, knowing well that Gaika's attitude had been governed less by loyalty than expediency. "But I do not expect that my words will have the slightest effect," he said.

Slagters Nek is essentially a tragedy of Dutch life. All its chief actors were Dutchmen. At the

very outset it was Landdrost Stockenstroom who urged the prosecution of Frederick Bezuidenhout for constantly ignoring the orders of his court; it was Landdrost Cuyler, a stern Dutch disciplinarian, who was so prominent in suppressing the rebellion with the help of burgher and British troops: and let it be emphasized again that the trial, condemnation and execution of the prisoners were all conducted by Dutchmen. During the last retreat of Johannes Bezuidenhout to the Winterberg, he regretted that he had been led into such courses against his Government *which, he said, had done him no harm*. Moreover, his widow at the trial did not mention a single English name: indeed made it clear that her late husband chiefly blamed a certain Field Cornet Opperman for the events that culminated in the shooting of his brother.

The Slagters Nek lie must be wiped off the slate. For over a hundred years it has maliciously attributed all the bungling of that last terrible gallows scene to a ruthless British administration: and has elevated to political martyrdom a group of border ruffians determined to provoke a massacre, in full knowledge of what that would entail to Dutch and British settlers alike.

Let us hear no more of Slagters Nek.

## CHAPTER II

### A SHEPHERD LAD THERE WAS

#### I

**T**WENTY years had passed. On a kopje at Vaalbank, Cape Colony, a little lad might have been seen watching his father's flocks. His obvious discontent was due to the fact that the farm slaves had all been freed by the English, and that he—a hunter born—was now compelled to do their work.

The lad had but a vague idea of life. He knew only what he heard at the family table. He had learned nothing of the white man's kingdoms in the North, the yellow man's crowded acres in the East, or the red man's vanishing prairies in the West. Schooled in the way of prejudice, he had heard his people speak of Slagters Nek, had heard them grumble that the English had bought the slaves on the Boer farms and had set them free in the midst of the harvest so that the crops had rotted where they stood. He had heard that compensation had been made payable in England, so far away, that the people had been put to heavy loss in getting payment. And he had heard stories of missionaries who had spread lying reports in England concerning the supposed cruelty of the Boers to the natives. The shepherd lad thus grew to hate the people who had done these things. He hoped his "volk" would trek away from them.

His name was Paul Kruger.



## 2

Kruger's father and uncles did trek away from their farm in May, 1835, crossing the savage Orange River and driving 30,000 sheep and cattle before them. They sold the sheep at two shillings a head, and camped near the Caledon River. As they trekked little Kruger heard more about the English: how, to escape from their rule several big treks of Dutch farmers were imminent, and that long lines of waggons would soon be winding over the Cape mountains on their way into the wilderness. He probably saw in his mind's eye the dust of future convoys rising like gold in the sun as the people drove on in search of new homes.

It fell out as he had thought. In 1836 the Krugers joined Hendrik Potgieter's trek. Paul Kruger was given a gun. His happiness was unbounded. He went out with the hunters over the hills. He shot for the pot. When they halted at night, grass huts were built and the young folk taught to read. And there were dancing and love-making to enliven the journey and marvellous moons to light the revels. And there were solemn readings of the Bible by the old folk, great Bibles with mighty clasps; and hard-skinned thumbs traced the big print; gruff voices intoned the Word; and now and then from uncertain distances came the roar of the lion and the wild laughter of the hyena.

One day his big chance came. He went out hunting and beat up a lion. His uncles dismounted and tethered the horses with their heads together and their backs towards the angry lion, a plan to prevent them stampeding. Kruger was crouching between the lion and the tethered horses when the beast suddenly sprang over him at the backs of the animals. He fired. The shot killed the lion in flight and the body fell just short of

the horses. As the hunters came running up the boyish Nimrod jumped exultantly on the animal's ribs. It emitted a great roar which startled the approaching hunters. But the roar had been caused by the sudden deflation of the lungs. Kruger narrowly escaped a thrashing that time for he had much ado to persuade his uncles that the animal was dead when he jumped on it.

The day came, however, when he got one. An uncle had wounded a white rhino—a dangerous creature indeed!—and had shouted a warning to the lad to keep away from it as it ran past him into the bush. He paid no heed and chased it. Suddenly it turned and chased him and though he fled as fast as his young limbs could carry him, and he was the speediest runner among the emigrant boys, the rhino soon caught him and knocked him down. It was about to trample him when he managed to fire upwards into its head, and the charge proving fatal, it fell almost on top of him.

His uncle came running up then, refused to listen to his explanations, and administered a severe thrashing.

### 3

Yes, the days of the Trek certainly taught him self-reliance. The virgin wilderness tested his resource. Once when rations ran short and he had failed to shoot his quota for the pot, he was watching enviously the camp fire around which his more fortunate elders were grilling game. He lay down bemoaning his hard lot and assuring the flint-hearted hunters that death was indeed preferable to his privations, and that he was determined to end them all. With that he took out his powder horn which he had filled surreptitiously with water, and made as if to cast it on the fire. The hunters,

fearing they would be blown up, hurriedly dispersed, leaving the game to Kruger, who, when he told the story in later years, commented with a glint in his eye on the excellence of the meal he had enjoyed at their expense.

Game indeed was sometimes lacking during the early treks. But the young Kruger, ever a devotee of prayer and Bible reading, characteristics which won him the esteem of his fellows, once found himself with a party of trekkers in an apparently gameless region. After praying openly for Divine aid he stole forth into the bush in the early morning, and managed soundlessly to beat up the bustard which he had all along known to be there. As it flew over the burgher outspan the worthy hunters shot it down, and there was much private comment on the efficacy of Kruger's prayers.

Endless stories are told of his fleetness of foot in the Trek days. One told by Kruger himself in the ante-room of the Raadzaal in the later years of his Presidency is characteristic. He had incurred the displeasure of an elephant which chased him madly through the bush. While speeding along he tripped over a lion. Now when a lion is tripped over he is apt to yield to panic, and runs ahead in a straight line looking neither to right nor left, and (so said Kruger) this lion began racing along with him as both were desirous of escaping from the elephant.

"We were running together, the lion and I," said Oom Paul, "and sometimes the lion was in front and sometimes I. . . ."

"President!" interrupted the thin dry voice of Dr. Leyds from the doorway of the Raadzaal, "the Raad is waiting!"

Paul Kruger stood up then and went out. Nor did he ever finish that story.

## 4

The voortrekker Hendrik Potgieter was a real leader of men. While his little band of emigrants was still in what is now the Orange Free State, he and his brother Hermanus rode forth to spy out the land. They first went east towards Delagoa Bay, but disliked the sinister look of the country and turned north. They were impressed by the mighty baobab trees that rose ghost-like with huge arms outspread in the twilight, and were interested also in the half-breed sons of the fierce outlaw Coenraad du Buis who had fled the Cape and become a power among the blacks along the Limpopo. Like the Israelites of old seeking the promised land they saw strange sights: vast herds of wildebeeste and buffalo, and old mine workings in the hills.

But when they got back they were met, alas, with ghastly news. They heard that hordes of Matabele had swooped down on a party of elephant hunters who had gone out one day from the emigrant camp under old S. C. Erasmus and had speared them brutally to death.

Potgieter assembled his men at Vechtkop between the Rhenoster and Wilge Rivers. He lashed fifty waggons together and awaited the oncoming of other Matabele. In his laager was young Paul Kruger. A lad of twelve, he must have heard with deep emotion the prayers of the predikant, as, with eyes upturned he sought God's help for the victory. Almost at once over the brown hills came an army of blacks. Their song was like the lower notes of an organ. They came on brandishing assegais. Commandant Potgieter and a score of Boers clattered forth to meet them. They fired into the oncoming mass, saw some of the Matabele drop, retreated, reloaded, and fired again, all the while retiring on the waggons. Little Paul Kruger,

fascinated, watched them gallop forth and back safely into the waggon circle which was at once closed, took up his position with the men inside, and kept his eyes to the barrel of his gun. The Matabele sat down in a vast circle. They shouted derisively at the farmers. They would kill them to a man, they yelled. Then at a guttural command they jumped up hissing loudly and rushed on the waggons. The farmers fired again and again through the wheels. Their guns grew red hot. The women and children helped to reload: but Paul Kruger shot down many a warrior that day and did a grown man's work. For six hours the Matabele strove to break the circle, but finding that they could not and that many warriors had been slain, they hurled more than a thousand assegais over the waggon hoods and drove away the farmers' cattle which could not of course be kept in the laager; and although Potgieter and his followers charged after them until sundown, 4,600 head of cattle and 50,000 sheep were lost and the farmers ruined.

## 5

But Potgieter did not despair. With Commandant Mentz, he assembled a body of farmers to retake the cattle, and young Kruger went with him. The commando rode on for days over desolate country and found itself at dawn near Mosega, about 150 miles west of present-day Johannesburg, where they saw fifteen great kraals, the blue smoke of early morning fires, and some of the stolen cattle. Grimly they watched the scene through the pass. They stole nearer and took up commanding positions, unobserved. They were armed with long, clumsy, but deadly elephant guns. They opened fire. The bullets tore through the unresisting walls of the kraals, and the warriors, taken completely

by surprise came pouring forth, assegai and shield in hand. Their captain Kalipi was far away: they had no leader. They fell in scores. Panic seized them. The white force rode in, fired the kraals, and pursued the Matabele in all directions. They collected 7,000 head of cattle as well as sheep, and drove them back to their distant camp.

## 6

Time passed. The many thrashings the doughty farmers gave Moselikatze, the Matabele King, caused him eventually to retreat north of the Limpopo river into Rhodesia. But two chiefs still defied them. Mapela, one of them, fierce and crafty, invited Hermanus Potgieter, brother of victorious Hendrik Potgieter, to his kraal one day to show him his great store of ivory. When Potgieter appeared, the treacherous chief dragged him to the top of a hill, skinned him alive and disembowelled him. This horrible crime quickly got to the ears of the Boers. About that time, too, they heard that Mapela's neighbour Makapaan had savagely murdered a convoy of women and children trekking from the Zoutpansberg to Pretoria.

Commandant Pretorius accordingly rode out with 200 men from Pretoria—among them Paul Kruger—to punish Mapela and Makapaan. Commandant Piet Potgieter, nephew of the murdered Hermanus Potgieter joined them with one hundred men. The combined force defeated Makapaan, and drove his warriors headlong into the caves which ramified far into the mountains. They prepared to take a terrible revenge, for they blocked all egresses from the caves and saw that none escaped. Time took its toll. Gaunt and emaciated the defenders fired day and night from the cave-mouths on the besieging whites,

knowing that death was not far off. Yet death took long in coming.

One night, Kruger crept into these caves unperceived. He sat in silence among them. Then speaking in their own tongue, his deep voice booming eerily in the darkness, and pretending to be one of them, he urged them to surrender, for, said he, "the white men will not kill us!"

Presently a frightened voice said hoarsely: "Magoa!" (white man).

With that, the natives, terrified at the mysterious presence, fled into the farther recesses of the cave. The siege ceased at last. The few that survived were captured, tried by court-martial and shot. Thus the tribe perished.

Incidentally the bones of the tribesmen lay undisturbed for years, save for occasional hyenas and wild dogs. They lay there until one moonlit night in the late 'eighties, a Republican road party removed some of the skulls from the caves, approached a native camp-fire on the veld and suddenly swung the grinning relics over the campers from the ends of long bamboos. As the skulls swooped down apparently from the skies, the black campers set up a yell and stampeded madly into the veld.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mapela met his fate at the top of a high mountain. Led by Kruger, the Boers crept up barefooted in the night through a ravine to the summit. Although challenged by a sentry and met with rifle fire, they climbed to the kaffir entrenchments, provoked a panic among the blacks, who leaped over the precipice into a tree-filled ravine, and thus brought the campaign to an end. Long after, the tangled bush was literally hung with corpses.

In this grim school, then, was moulded the

granite will of Stephanus Paul Kruger. He feared no man and no nation. In after years his very fearlessness, coupled with dislike of all settlers whose outlook differed from his own, helped to implement that race-conflict which has persisted for a hundred years.

But, while Kruger was in the thick of his adventure in the caves of Makapaan, there was born in England a lad who was to prove no less courageous, no less resolute, and of larger mind. He was destined to fight a grim duel with Kruger and to win it for the time being.

His name was Cecil John Rhodes.



## CHAPTER III

### PARSON'S SON GOES DIAMOND DIGGING

#### I

**C**ECIL RHODES was born in 1853 at Bishop's Stortford, a small market-town some 25 miles north of London. His father was a tall dreamy person of polished manners; his grandfather a prosperous cowkeeper of Islington.

From the first the child had a will of his own. Like Paul Kruger who had once cut off his own shattered thumb with a penknife on the veld, Rhodes was stoical under pain. With childish resolve he would grit his teeth and scorn the solace of tears.

A significant tale is told of him by one of the masters of Bishop's Stortford school, a tale of an old-time cricket match. We see the players darting about a dark-green sward, the male spectators in black stove-pipe hats, the women in crinolines.

One of the batsmen presently skied a ball squarely to leg. It struck a child, standing with his nurse, heavily on the arm. The batsmen rushed to the spot. The crowd closed round. Notwithstanding his agony the little fellow sturdily refused to cry. "I was impressed by the delicacy of his frame and the small bones," was the comment of the master, "and by the fortitude of the little boy."

Such, as a child, was Cecil Rhodes.

At the vicarage the little fellow must have heard admiring talk of Livingstone blazing his romantic trails across the Congo, followed (shortly after young Rhodes arrived in Africa) by Stanley's

search for him in the equatorial forests. He heard talk, too, of savages, pygmies, lakes and giant waterfalls, of a new continent awaiting the coming of the white man. What an anomaly, he must have thought, tight little England supporting her millions, with multitudes sunk in slum depravity, while the vast unpeopled tracts of Mother Africa awaited workers!

## 2

Rhodes was seventeen when he landed at Durban. He was a pale lanky lad shadowed by ill-health, but intending to join his brother Herbert as a planter near Richmond in the lovely valley of the Umkomaas. As Herbert then happened to be up country on one of his many journeys of adventure—the craze for adventure led to his death in a burning hut in the wilds some years afterwards—Cecil went to Maritzburg to stay with Doctor Sutherland, Surveyor-General of Natal, and Mrs. Sutherland whose mother's heart was touched by the frail appearance of the lad.

Both liked him. They liked his quiet ways, his love of books, his long stride as he rambled thoughtfully over the hills. And in truth there was plenty to think about then: land shortage, the root of all wars, foreshadowing the scramble for Africa: Bismarck looking down like a satyr on the world: Moltke smashing France at Metz and Sedan: Italy and her statesmen marching on to nationhood: and England strengthening her hold on Egypt.

The brother came back. Cecil went to his brother's estate. The red light of evening, shadow and sun on the great ranges, the palms and bush and the broad golden river, all must have filled this boy with deep content, with an impression of an Africa of great spaces needing settlers.

Why did they not come? In England "Joe" Chamberlain was pleading with the taxpayer on behalf of a congested stay-at-home Birmingham and describing the slums as "not fit for a dog to die in;" yet Natal had now to introduce a bill to import 50,000 Indians to work in the Natal plantations, an importation destined to lead to increasing claims from the Indians for political rights in Africa, and even to threats against white supremacy in the colony.

Young Rhodes, struck by the anomaly of an overcrowded mother country and this new and lovely land without workers, toiled vigorously on his brother's estate in the valley of the Umkomaas and cleared and planted 100 acres, though handicapped by shortage of labour and lack of funds. Assailed as he and his brother were by all the pests, they yet persevered and even won show prizes. Tropical storms sometimes flooded their lands. During one of these, Herbert, seeing his oxen and waggon overwhelmed in a torrent and swept towards the rapids, plunged in, cut the harness and rescued the oxen, a most daring feat which would have cost most men their lives.

### 3

Then Herbert heard of the big diamond finds and went to Kimberley. Cecil followed.

He set out from his humble little Natal shack one day in October, 1871. Into his Scotch cart he piled rations, a bucket and spade, a Greek lexicon and some volumes of the classics. With a crack of the whip the lanky youth drove off with his team of oxen. His route lay by way of ill-made tracks, along the eastern edge of the wild and glorious Drakensberg. He went through to Harrismith, crossed the sombre passes and reached Bloemfontein.

On the way he had one adventure with wild dogs, savage creatures which hunt in packs like wolves. They will tear sheep and oxen to pieces. One evening he saw the shadowy forms of a pack rapidly approaching. Raising his gun he fired, killing two of the dogs. The others instantly tore them asunder. While doing so, Rhodes fired again into the snarling pack and killed enough to satisfy the remainder. Meanwhile, the terrified oxen had lumbered from the track to the veld. With the greatest difficulty Rhodes managed to get them back: but they would not be pacified and went hurrying on through the darkness.<sup>1</sup> Portuguese East African wild dogs have been known to rend and devour solitary natives; and such is the terror they inspire that natives hearing them will often climb trees and remain there for the night.

## 4

Rhodes's intrepidity grew with the years. He feared neither man nor project. Inspired by an immense earnestness he smashed all obstacles. When he fought Kruger as to whether the two Boer Republics or a United Southern Africa under the British flag should prevail, there ensued a conflict of wills which literally shook the world. It led to the Anglo-Boer War, to England's abandonment of her policy of isolation in Europe, and to the formation of those great international alliances which faced up to each other during the Great War.

Meanwhile, unsuspecting of his imposing destiny the boy jogged along with his rickety cart, his Greek lexicon and his ambitions, to the diamond fields, which he reached at the end of November, 1871.

<sup>1</sup> An incident related by Rhodes at a dinner-party at the Naval and Military Club, London, in 1897, at the time of the Jameson Raid Inquiry before a Select Committee of the House of Commons.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE COMING OF THE DIAMOND MEN

#### I

**A**N old Boer was one day on trek. His tented waggon, or ship of the veld, was headed along ravine and track for the Land of Nowhere. He came at last to two lines of shining rails, the purpose of which he did not know: but as night was fast approaching and the lines made a suitable anchorage for the wheels, he halted his waggon across the track and outspanned the oxen.

Night fell. The farmer lit his pipe and dreamily watched the stars and the rising moon. All around were mountains like vapours rising from the earth. Presently there fell upon his ears a mysterious rumbling, and he saw a distant light, the lanthorn as he imagined of some ragged Hottentot leading his ox-cart to a good outspan.

But what was this? The rumbling suddenly became violent. The light shot towards him with a velocity utterly foreign to his experience. A long dark object dashed ferociously at his poor waggon, smashed it to bits, then vanished in the night!

The farmer stood up, shook a clenched fist at the thing that had gone, and yelled "Verdomde Engelsman!"

#### 2

Thus loosely was the term "Englishman" formerly applied. Thus, also, will the new South Africa—as a nation of united peoples—inevitably

break through the picturesque booms of the patriarchal ox-waggon.

Strangely enough it was Britain that in the process of making her two historic blunders south of the Zambesi, set a waggon across the track of a United South Africa. These blunders were:

(a) Provoking the emigration north in the eighteen 'thirties of those sturdy Dutch farmers, the voortrekkers:

(b) Encouraging by way of the Sand River Convention (1852) and the Bloemfontein Convention (1854) the establishment of those intrepid little *voortrekker* republics the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, across the line of advance of the future South African nation.

The Republic Orange Free State, and the little burgher states over the Vaal, quickly became nations: or rather assumed those attributes of exclusiveness which belong to nationhood. They began to make history. Much that is sacred to-day to the heart of the Boer is graven on their obelisks. The wide plains of the Free State and its flat-topped hills, old and beautiful at sunset, recall the time when the burghers drove the black men into their fastnesses and the blacks came back to burn their farms. Across the peaceful Vaal—rolling her diamonds coastwards since the stone-age—the burghers also fought and died. They fought amid the blown smoke of their guns, knowing little of gold.

All that was long ago. All who moved in that pageant have gone, oblivious of their days and ours. Yet to the dreamer, still the sun, sinking behind the hills, shakes its golden spears at the dragons of the skies. The ghosts of yester-year come forth. The great chiefs come marching over the ranges: phantom smoke rises again from the burning: the wraiths of men and driven cattle

move in the wan light: the hopes, despairs and fustian of old wars take shape in the mist.

Great indeed is the tale of yesterday! Yet, would it not have been better far for the Africa of To-morrow, if Republican territories had been held from the first by the two chief white races, instead of by the one?

"If" said Mackenzie in his "Austral Africa," "the United States was right in regulating the spread of white men westward, and if the Northern States were right in determining at all hazards to maintain inviolate the Union of the United States, then was the Government wrong in South Africa when it allowed one human swarm after another to pass out of the Cape Colony northward, and assume independence on its borders."<sup>1</sup>

## 3

The diggers were marching north. The vultures were dropping stone-like from the skies. They lit upon the yellow roads in the late 'sixties, dusty and littered with dead mules and sometimes with the bodies of men.

A strange army this—an army sweeping inexorably towards the little republics that did not want them! In its ranks were sailors such as Champagne Charlie who made a five-hundred-mile jaunt from Durban in his sea-togs and "salted" his first claim with a green glass bottle-stopper; schoolmasters, clerks, soldiers, priests and robbers, all were racing day and night to the Vaal river diggings. Queerest of all were two young men trundling a barrow, who as they set out from

<sup>1</sup> "My friends, which would be wiser, to let the top floor of my store to a rival in business," asked President Lincoln once, "or to expand my own business to fill that floor? I put it to you that that is the position of our country to-day. We have either to have one store—one nation, or to hire one half of it to our brethren of the south. They will establish a rival business and so arrest the development of the State. That must not happen. We must be one business—one nation."

Durban, one harnessing himself in front and the other lifting the handles, were given a rousing cheer.

A fortnight later they were seen wheeling their barrow through the dark defiles of the mighty Drakensberg. Joining later in the rush to Colesberg Kopje, they had the amazing luck to peg out a claim in the middle of the mine. And thus the two hoboes who had come into the camp hungry, dusty and urging along their forlorn barrow, departed in a short while with substantial fortunes.

Meanwhile, diamonds in large quantities continued to be found near the river. But few recognized at the time the seriousness of the fact that the diggings were on or within Republican borders.

All this was before Rhodes came.

#### 4

Along the Vaal, then, that old river of dreams, with the willows drooping to the water, camped the vanguard of the digger army. By day with a noise as of a ceaseless wind they rocked their sieves, and by night sat in their tents, as in a fairy-world of dull balloons. Darkness echoed the drone of voices. Cards and the bottle, fortunes made and lost, drunken slumber—and nobody cared!

Among the stranger hosts the forceful men came to the fore. J. B. Robinson, six feet, with white helmet, and a flair for million-making; Aylward, the Fenian, who subsequently shot a brother digger, raised the black flag against the government of diggings, and wrote a book in which he denied the right of the British Government to the diamond fields; Barker the fighting Irishman who upheld that right; and "President" Stafford Parker, in grey top-hat, frock-coat and dark glasses, a Californian forty-niner who had fought in the Crimea.



Once, before ever diamonds were found, and in order to earn a few shillings, this amazing Stafford Parker had gone to a Boer farm and offered to paint dadoes on the walls. Bunches of roses rapidly flowered under his brush. The old people were delighted. But, when diamonds were found, Parker departed—to paint no more. . . . He was destined to be one of the first to collide with the Boer waggon on the national track. And this was the manner of it. . . .

A British digger “over the river” had declined to pay Republican taxes or to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Republican President Pretorius. The landdrost therefore committed him to prison. Stafford Parker donned his grey top-hat and frock-coat and rode from Klipdrift for Hebron with a cohort of diggers with rifles and fixed bayonets. The twenty-one mile march was speedily accomplished.

Like a prophet of wrath (but hiding a white flag in case of emergency) Stafford Parker bore down on the landdrost. The overwhelming aspect of the man was enough. The rebel was instantly released, and the wrath of diggerdom appeased. Stafford Parker allowed himself to be elected President of the diggings.

Not long after, when driving along the countryside with a fine span of horses, Parker found himself in the vicinity of the very farm he had once bedizened with his roses. He introduced himself as “The President.” The old couple who believed him to be the President of the Republic and were quite overborne by the team of horses and the grey top-hat, welcomed him effusively. In the course of the evening, however, the farmer’s wife began to eye him suspiciously. She was trying to “place” him. In an unfortunate moment he had permitted himself to glance at the roses, whereupon she instantly identified

him. She said to her husband: "Ons is goed verneuk. Diet is nie die President: diet is die ou skilder!" ("We are humbugged! This is not the President: this is the old painter!")

He used to tell how, under the urge of early necessity, he had toured the Free State farms as a water-diviner.

"I will point out to you," he said to one old fellow, "where the water is. I want a hundred pounds. Pay me fifty down and the other fifty when you find the water!"

The farmer acquiesced. Parker went through some hocus pocus, indicated where the water was, took the £50 and undertook to return shortly for the balance. He did not return. Long after, having forgotten the incident, he met the farmer and failed to recognize him. Upon his announcing himself as Stafford Parker, the greybeard said:

"You owe me fifty pounds."

"Fifty pounds? What for?"

"I paid you to find water for me. I dug. There was no water."

"How far did you dig?"

"Thirty feet."

"You fool! You should have dug three-hundred feet!"

## 5

Of such were the men of the diggings—adventurers all. And it was not surprising that they soon became dissatisfied with the river claims. Many believing the diamonds to have come from old volcanoes and to have been carried into the river by rains, gradually abandoned the river diggings and fossicked farther afield. There was pegging of Boer farms.

Now it so happened that in the winter of 1871, close to a black kopje, there was encamped a

party of bearded men with red caps. They had had trouble with a drunken cook and had packed him off. His master, Fleetwood Rawstorne, relenting, however, had given him another chance, and had indicated a low-lying kopje with the words, "Go and dig over there!"

The cook had departed resolved to make good.

A night or two later the red-capped men were playing cards in a candle-lit tent, when the flaps were suddenly thrust aside and Damon, the cook, peered in.

"Baas, I want you," he said, excitement in his voice.

Rawstorne, a man of twenty-six looked up:

"Come inside," he said. "You can speak. We are all friends here!"

Damon walked in, opened his hand, and displayed several small diamonds. The players jumped up. Quickly they gathered pegs and hatchets, and led by Damon hurried along to where the diamonds had been found. The night was frosty with a big white moon overhead. Damon took them to a shaft twelve feet deep dug in the shade of an old camelthorn tree. Rawstorne pegged off his first claim round the hole. Ultimately two of his claims proved to be inside the pipe of the mine.

This was the beginning of the mighty Kimberley mine, and naturally enough the next day, July 17, 1871, the great rush of river-diggers to the mine diggings began, and the country was pegged for miles around.

The mine about which the city of Kimberley has since grown, is at the western end of an irregular ellipse of other great mines, all within a mile or two of each other, and crowded with diamonds and romance. The mines are Kimberley, De Beers, Wesselson, Du Toit's Pan and Bultfontein.

In the 'seventies, travellers approaching this

spot by day, began to see a vast cloud of yellow dust. It lay like a pall over the plains, dust of the diggers' sieving. Under it stood the endless tents of the strangers, the advance screen of the swelling hosts from the south. They were yet to prove a dire threat to the Republics whose waggons, emblematic of their nationhood, lay firmly across the northward track. Another tent was soon added to the rest. It was that of Cecil Rhodes who with his cart, spade, and Greek lexicon, drove into the camp four months after the discovery of the Kimberley Mine.

But he was one of many. He settled down unnoticed.

## CHAPTER V

### THE HARD SCHOOL MAKES THE MAN

#### I

Our life is like a shining play  
Where each man hideth from himself.  
"Let us be open as the day,"  
One man doth to the other say,  
That he may deeper hide himself.  
Ah, well-a-day, thou art asleep!

Our life is like a narrow raft  
Afloat upon a hungry sea,  
"Give me thy hand this stormy day,"  
One man doth to the other say,  
Then thrusts his brother in the sea.  
Ah, well-a-day, thou art asleep!  
Ah, well-a-day, thou art asleep!

LIFE was hard, remorseless. Yet it had its moments of beauty. As old John Eustace Fannin the Natal magistrate, who worked diamond claims in the 'seventies, put it in a letter to his wife:

"It is a wonderful sight here at night. The river flowing along, a glorious moon overhead, lights all along the banks (both sides) shining out from the green foliage; and if you walk among the tents, it looks just like a fair, music, gambling, drinking going on at the canteens, people of all kinds passing to and fro, carts rattling down the hills. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Yes, life was rough. But Rhodes settled down to it and took it all in. He erected his defences, pondered the line of his thrust towards prosperity. A friend of Sir Lewis Michell, one of Rhodes's

<sup>1</sup> "The Fannin Papers; A Pioneer's Story of the Diamond Fields and the Zulu War," by Natalie Fannin.

biographers, penned the following picture of him in his early camping days in 1872:

"A tall fair boy, blue-eyed, with aquiline features, wearing flannels . . . shrunk with strenuous rather than effectual washings that still left the colour of the red veld dust . . . the picture of his tall delicate figure crumpled up on an inverted bucket as he sat scraping his gravel, surrounded by his dusky Zulus, lives in my memory."

Rhodes roughened and hardened. To some extent he lost his sensitiveness, a change due to the swift development of his big mind and, it may be, also to the absence of refining amenities, particularly of women, in the camp.

## 2

There were few women on the fields then, few indeed with the homeliness and charm of his late friends in Natal. The arrival of a newcomer would cause great excitement. Half the camp would turn out to greet her. The story is recalled of one who arrived in a cloud of dust, was accorded a rousing welcome which she acknowledged with jaunty waves of the hand, then smilingly announced that she would visit a certain canteen that night to "meet the boys."

Forthwith there was a feverish sprucing up; long-forgotten garments were retrieved; the reach-me-down took on the glamour of the great occasion; there were several fights and the threat of others, until tiring of fisticuffs and profitless bravado, the lady at last mounted a chair in the canteen and suggested that she should be auctioned!

Then ensued the strangest of bidding. An elderly merchant won with a bid of £25, and three cases of champagne. To the dismay of the diggers who had begun to respond to her badinage, the

merchant led his prize away, and it seemed that she would be lost for ever.

There were ominous murmurings. Presently the crowd swarmed out of the canteen and bore down on the merchant's tent. They cut the ropes and folded it up, leaving the exasperated old gentleman and his bewildered consort staring at the stars.

Hard schools make hard men.

## 3

As the claims were dug out, some more rapidly than others, the mines began to resemble vast dry honeycombs with the surface gone. Little oblong towers rose boldly here and there where some claim-holders had dug more slowly. And over the top ran countless cables flashing like the fairy filaments of a gigantic web. Rhodes always watched his natives closely. He saw that the sieving was thoroughly done, that the thief looking for an opportunity at his expense never got one.

He saw how prevalent were thefts; how many a digger had been ruined by thievish natives; how they stole diamonds and sold them to the canteen keepers. He determined not to be victimized. He had seen furious diggers, suspecting the thieves, run amok bent on murder. One man had actually drawn the whole of a suspect's teeth with a pair of carpenter's pincers! Another had thrashed and shot a native. In July, 1872, the men of New Rush Camp set an Indian's tent on fire, searched him, found stolen diamonds, stripped and flogged him, and kicked him out of the camp.

One evening, too, a blaring band had led four thousand rioters to another canteen tent in which the barman had already been arrested on a charge of illicit diamond buying. Casks of liquor were broached, bottles of wine and brandy broken, tent

lines cut, and the whole set on fire. A mighty flame roared into the night.

The crowd, excited and out of hand, swept from place to place, until suddenly there was a clatter of hoofs:

"Stand back or I fire!" yelled an officer.

The diggers thought better of it—and retired.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the rioting did not always end that way. Once a powerful digger resenting the interference of the police, seized their officer and threatened to hurl him into a blazing tent.

Illicit diamond buyers naturally became desperate when caught. One such illicit buyer escaping towards No Man's Land—a region over which the digger police had no jurisdiction—was hotly pursued by a posse of police who fired at him. How was he to save his gems? To have dropped them in the road would have entailed their loss and his conviction; and with the diggers in an ugly mood he feared the consequences. But along the road some hundred yards ahead he saw a dead mule swollen in the sun. An idea struck him. Dropping his diamonds into the barrel of his gun he tamped them with a crumpled envelope. Then he fired them into the body of the mule.

After that he surrendered.

"Give up the sparklers!" ordered the police officer.

"I haven't any."

They searched in vain.

"What was the shooting for?"

"Practice."

"Go back and search the road," roared the furious Sergeant. Two of his men went back.

The illicit dealer was eventually released and lost no time in getting back to the dead mule before it had been devoured by vultures. He



recovered his diamonds and put many miles between himself and the diggers' camps, well knowing what fate would befall him if they caught him.

## 4

Three years later (1875) came the so-called Black Flag rebellion headed by Alfred Aylward, the Irish renegade and Fenian.

One day a weird piratical horseman wearing a huge sombrero was seen galloping down the main street in Kimberley shouting and waving a black flag. A sabre dangled at his side. His eyes were bloodshot, his thick red lips protruded between heavy black beard and moustache. Behind him, veiled in dust, galloped Albany Paddon, a tame figure compared with his leader. The two men and a number of others closed about a flagstaff. In a voice of thunder Aylward ordered Paddon to hoist the flag.

And thus the black flag was run up over the diggings. When, however, the rumour went abroad that a British military force of infantry, cavalry and artillery was marching up from the Cape, the ferocious Aylward retired to a farm, and, to make quite sure of his own safety quietly crossed into the Republican Transvaal. President Burgers made him captain then of a force known as the Lydenburg Volunteers, which operated from Fort Burgers and kept the rebellious Sekukuni contained within his own country. Aylward was at Lydenburg during the 1881 war, where he fought against the British and did his best to compel the garrison's surrender.

Throughout all this turbulence young Rhodes kept his head. He determined he would not surrender to his environment. While he entered into camp life and became part of it, while his

thinking became broad and liberal, he had no time for its degradation. Craving knowledge as he did and convinced of the necessity of it, he went to Oxford, there to dream amid the old, old towers of learning and the rich clangour of the college chimes, of a new land in the south, a new dominion where his crowded and overwrought countrymen might find settlement. "Learn all you can; see all you can!" was his admonition then to his University friends, the sheltered fledgelings of a comfortable Victorian aristocracy.

At this period three convictions stood uppermost in his mind:

- (a) The need of great wealth to implement big schemes, and the futility of big thinking without big money;
- (b) the need to safeguard the diamond market by amalgamating the mines and controlling the fast increasing output; and
- (c) the necessity for the acquirement of large territorial tracts for Imperial British settlement.

Rhodes, back at the diggings from Oxford, talked of little else but these things—to the wonderment of his friends. Then again he went back to Oxford.

## CHAPTER VI

### SIR BARTLE FRERE LOOKS AT THE MOON

#### I

SIR BARTLE FRERE, High Commissioner of South Africa, rather resembled General "Chinese" Gordon. Like that Victorian dictator, soldier and saint, he made the "Imitation of Christ," his inspiration.

Some time after Britain had annexed the diamond fields in 1871—following the promulgation of the Keate award and the payment by Great Britain of £90,000 to the Free State in settlement of all claims—Sir Bartle Frere found himself on a Transvaal farm, the guest of a warm admirer, the farmer Oberholzer. Sitting on a rock one night he looked up at the skies and said:

"Strange, is it not, that the planets are worlds like ours with rocks and minerals?"

"And the moon?" inquired the farmer.

"The moon also."

"I'm sure, then, there are no diamonds in the moon."

"Why?"

"If there were, you English would have annexed it long ago."

#### 2

That was what the Republicans thought of Great Britain. The poor Republicans—so poor that the Transvaal President was paid £300 a year only when the burghers could afford it—had heard

great stories of the wealth that had passed them by, wealth annexed by Britain.

Whose, then, was the diamond territory?

First, a little illustration. On the map, the Orange Free State rather resembles a human heart lying on its side. The heart seems to be resting on the line of the Orange River, its upper part with its Cupid's bow facing east and Basutoland embedded in that bow. The lower pointed part of the heart points west.

The first rush of the diggers was into this lower pointed portion. It was an area of uncertain ownership, and the rush angered quite a lot of people who claimed it. It revived, for instance, the ancient claims of the Griquas, that coloured race of bastard hunters who had wandered into that territory from the Cape many years before. These people had come into being in the eighteenth century when white sailors and others had visited the slave women at the Cape and when there had been intercourse between the farmers and the Hottentots. For a hundred years these half-castes had wandered forth until at the end of the eighteenth century five thousand of them had settled along the Orange River on a frontage of six hundred miles. They crossed the river and went over the present Free State border into Philippolis, Campbell and Griquatown. They arranged their boundaries among themselves long before the *voortrekkers* crossed the Orange River looking for new homes. And in the late 'sixties they were still there, along the lower part of the "heart" afore-said, there, too, when the diggers came with their sudden northward rush. The heart began to thump with excitement then, indeed shook both republics, body and soul.

But the white diggers were not allowed to remain in placid possession. Claimants constantly appeared. Furious Griquas ordered them to depart

and to put back all the excavated earth into the holes they had made. The diggers laughed at them. The Transvaal Republicans under Pretorius, and the Free State burghers both brought along armed forces. But the diggers always stood firm. They raised flags and fixed bayonets and looked so incredibly fierce that the claimants kept off.

Thus matters remained until it became clear that unless the ownership of the diggings was settled at once there would be bloodshed. And in the end Governor Keate of Natal held his famous official inquiry.

At the hearing, the old Chief Waterboer steadfastly maintained his claims. Even when it was alleged that his brother Chief Adam Kok had sold the diamond and other territory to the Free State for £4,000 he queried his right to sell it, asserting that it had never been Kok's to sell; it belonged to him (Waterboer) under an old agreement. This old agreement laid it down that Waterboer's lands lay west of what was known as the Platberg line—in other words he claimed that virtually the whole of the diamond fields were in his territory.

Governor Keate heard many witnesses. In the end he upheld Waterboer; but that chief fearing the weight of his new responsibilities, sold his rights to the British Government, which annexed the fields after paying £90,000 to the Free State Republic in full settlement of claims. Trouble began at once. The award was greatly resented by the burghers. It led to the resignation of President Pretorius. It initiated a long series of difficulties which culminated in the Anglo-Boer war of '81.

Award or no award the continued presence of an unruly population on the border endangered the peace of the land.

## 3

The ownership of the fields has since become a matter of great controversy. This is not surprising. For land cessions and titles based on the verbal statements of native and coloured chiefs cannot possibly have the same force as properly executed transfers by Europeans accustomed to the usages of the law. Tshaka, Dingaan, Lobengula, Kamaherero and other native kings all gave lands and concessions such as those of Waterboer and Kok; but European attempts to regard them as conferring unassailable rights are absurd.

A large measure of doubt therefore must always rest with such judgments as the Keate award. Whichever way it had gone, it would have been based on the insecure foundation of an original Griqua title.

## CHAPTER VII

### PAUL KRUGER'S RISE TO POWER

#### I

**K**RUGER was fighting his way to power. He had distinguished himself in the farmers' wars with the natives; he had learned to know his people, and they had learned to trust him.

They saw in him an utterly fearless man, born to command; dark-bearded, thickset, surly, his heavy-lidded eyes flashing fire as he rode along, his voice surely the deepest ever heard. He had led burgher commandos against powerful native chiefs, had defeated Mapela in 1858 and had engaged the Batlapin and the formidable Basutos.

When the *voortrekkers* had gone north with their thousand waggons into the unknown wilderness, so passionate had been their desire for freedom that the leaders became independent even of each other: and the little republics they founded at first made occasional war on one another until they learned the folly of it all. They were in the presence of that ever menacing enemy, the black man.

Kruger took part in the civil wars. He threw down the battle gage whenever necessary and was rarely beaten; a circumstance by no means lost on the burghers who elected him Commandant-General of a more or less unified South African Republic in 1863.

The most important of his small civil wars was waged against the giant Stephanus Schoeman, a man of courage with a considerable burgher follow-

ing. Schoeman became acting President of the South African Republic in 1860, but on being dismissed refused to give up office, until Paul Kruger marched to Pretoria and drove him out. Schoeman then went to Potchefstroom and held it with 300 to 400 men—until the formidable Kruger once more went after him with 800 to 1,000 men and three pieces of artillery and besieged him there. Schoeman made a sortie or two, but Kruger was ready for him, and drove him back with some loss of life, firing a few cannon balls—solid round shot—into the village. Schoeman retired towards the Free State border accompanied by President Pretorius who had come up from the Free State to try to stop the fratricidal strife.

## 2

The little armies certainly had a homely way of making war. When Schoeman was about to retreat from Potchefstroom (with Kruger thundering at the gates) the good Pretorius placed his wife and Mrs. Schoeman in the waggon where they sat blinking gloomily from under their white sun-bonnets, and, no oxen being available and also perhaps because he was in a hurry, Schoeman attached reins to the waggon and got his burghers to haul it along. Thus he retreated hurriedly towards the Klip River. The young girls of Potchefstroom shed many a tear as the "army" departed. Standing in the doorways they beheld the last of their gallants and dancing partners.

Schoeman's men were hardly out of sight before those of Kruger entered. Tired, hungry and thirsty, the conquerors made a house-to-house search for food and drink, but could only discover a barrel or two of peach brandy. Kruger angrily warned the inhabitants that anybody firing upon



him would be shot. His black beard and deep voice inspired terror among them.

After a brief stay in the town he clattered forth in pursuit of Schoeman, his commandos vanishing in clouds of dust. They had with them three ship's cannon on waggons. For these there was a fair supply of gunpowder.

At length after a strenuous pursuit, Kruger's exhausted force overtook the fugitives and got a cannon off the waggon. Two shots were fired, neither finding a mark, whereupon the gunners reloaded the gun, left it where it was, and sat down to rest and to smoke. A few prisoners came in. Schoeman once more vanished.

Now it so happened that the good burgher Oupa (grandfather) Geldenhuys had brought his dog with Kruger's commando. The old man watched it approvingly as he chewed his biltong. A curious thing happened. The dog espied and chased a buck in the direction of the loaded cannon. The gun had been broiling in the sun for a quarter of an hour and the metal was fiercely hot when the buck dived under the barrel. The dog attempting to do the same, thumped bodily into it. Whether or not the animal had kicked a flint against the touch-hole powder was not known: but the cannon went off. The roar of the explosion threw the dog on its back. It was up in a moment, flying down the slopes maddened with terror.

"General," said Oupa Geldenhuys, "much as I want to help you in this war, I must now find my dog."

"You're no commando," growled Kruger.

"General," repeated the old man, "I must find my dog."

Kruger was too wise to insist. And the old man went his way.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Narrated to the author by the Rand pioneer, Mrs. Sam Wemmer, shortly before her death in 1933. Mrs. Wemmer was related to ex-President Pretorius.

But now Kruger, unable to trace Schoeman, rode back to Potchefstroom only to find that his wily antagonist had doubled back on his tracks and was again in possession of the town. It took all the diplomacy of Pretorius to patch up a doubtful peace between them in a tent midway between the two camps.

Shortly afterwards the turbulent Schoeman again entrenched himself in Pretoria with an armed force, and when Kruger called upon all good burghers to rally in defence of law and order, Schoeman fled, taking with him Mrs. Schoeman and the State flag. The old lady, who seems to have thoroughly enjoyed these outings, returned the flag in 1863, when the Schoemans promised to do their best to settle down. This they did quite successfully; and the decree of banishment passed upon them was rescinded.

### 3

But wars cost money, and the Republic was soon in grave financial difficulty. Native trouble broke out in the Zoutpansberg in 1864, and there was no money to finance a campaign. Eventually indeed the great Zoutpansberg district was abandoned, only one village remaining in possession of the Boers. It was then that Kruger, as Commandant-General of the Republic, learned the lesson of the power of money.

Money! Untold millions lay on their border barely out of their reach. The burghers beheld with growing bitterness their own increasing poverty and the vast wealth of the diamond fields. The natives, too, were becoming still more restive because the Keate award freed such tribes as the Bechuanas and Korannas from Boer jurisdiction, and inspired others with a desire to free

themselves. The white man's failure to hold the Zoutpansberg increased that disposition.

It was in this disturbed atmosphere that Matthew Smith, a canteen keeper in the district of Christiana, almost brought matters to a head one day. He erected a reed hut in a position to which the local landdrost objected.

"You must remove it!" the landdrost said.

"I refuse. This isn't your territory."

The landdrost arrested the man and set fire to his hut that night. The canteen-keeper broke out of his frail jail, escaped to Kimberley and complained that he had been assaulted and imprisoned in territory not belonging to the Republic. Sir Henry Barkly at once wrote to President Burgers demanding compensation and the surrender of the landdrost for arresting the canteen-keeper on ground external to his jurisdiction.

Burgers refused, and, in the end the matter dropped. The incident again proved, however, how inimical to peace was the presence of the digger community on the Republican borders.

\* \* \* \* \*

But even in those days Rhodes was holding steadfastly before him the words of Ruskin delivered in a memorable Oxford oration:

"Will you youths of England make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle for all the world, a source of light, a centre of peace? . . . This is what England must either do or perish. She must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing any piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching her colonists fidelity to their country. . . ."

Rhodes made these words the motive of his life.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW A FEARLESS MAN FOUNDED FORT BURGERS

#### I

**K**RUGER meanwhile strode on steadily towards the Presidency. And, strangely enough, the rebellious tribesmen helped him there.

From all parts came rumours of tribal disturbances; of Boer farms raided by blacks; of encroachments by the chiefs. Sekukuni on the eastern frontier and Cetewayo King of Zululand on the south-east, both arming themselves for war with the white man.

President Thomas Burgers, the visionary ex-parson and politician who had succeeded Pretorius in 1872, decided to take the field against Sekukuni. In doing so he ignored the advice of those who felt that Commandant Kruger with his long experience of native warfare, should go instead.<sup>1</sup> The campaign proved to be the culmination of a long series of blunders. For instance, Burgers, just returned from Europe to raise a loan to construct a railway from the Transvaal to Lourenco Marques, a loan against the security of Republican farms, had already spent the loan funds on railway material in Belgium, and had incurred liability on a rail survey. He found when he landed in Cape-town that he had not even enough to pay the salary of the engineer, much less for the actual construction of the line. It was a shocking mess

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Engelbrecht in his "Life of Thomas Francois Burgers" maintains that Kruger was offered the leadership of the Boer commandos against Sekukuni and refused it.

and one which loaded an already bankrupt state with yet heavier liabilities.

His next mistake was to move against Sekukuni. "He walked about all night deciding whether he or Kruger should lead the commando," said the late Fred Struben, then his aide-de-camp. He rode forth eventually at the head of a distrustful force. They disliked his advanced thinking in matters of religion. They feared they were under the leadership of a "godless" commandant.

So Burgers moved against Sekukuni. He found himself operating among great mountains, fortified and almost inaccessible. And yet his operations were at first successful. The Boers inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, and dislodged him from one mountain, killing a chief. Then came a sudden panic.

"Huis toe!" they shouted, scrambling down the rocky slopes and galloping away.

"Stop! Stop!" cried Burgers, standing there bareheaded in the sun, his long auburn beard blowing in the wind. "Stop, in God's name, before you dishonour me!"

But nothing would stop them. Burgers' Great Commando fled and soon put many miles between itself and Sekukuni's stronghold.

## 2

Now, there had been in Burgers' force the young Prussian, Captain von Schlieckmann, the favourite nephew of General Manteuffel. He had been wounded in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and decorated at Wissembourg with the Iron Cross. Many stories are told of his intrepidity. Fred Struben used to relate how when advancing through a wild ravine with Burgers' force, Schlieckmann espied a native about to shoot him from behind rocky cover. The Prussian coolly began

to stalk him from rock to rock. At the same time another of Burgers' men saw the native and took aim at him. Unfortunately this second stalker had so little control of himself that his shots spattered the rocks in dangerous proximity to Von Schlieckmann.

"By God, sir!" yelled the Prussian turning round, "if you don't stop firing I'll put a bullet through *you*!"

Then he went on. The native once more peered stealthily over the rock. Schlieckmann fired at close range and blew the man's head off.

Von Schlieckmann was furious with the Great Commando for deserting Burgers. He even approached the distressed President-Commandant during the retreat at Steelpoort River, eighteen miles from Sekukuni's town, and proposed that he should be permitted to establish forts on the frontier, and harass Sekukuni during the spring and summer to prevent him acquiring the food supplies with which to conduct a second campaign. Burgers agreed. It seemed a good plan. And so in August, 1876, the President arranged to establish and man two forts; and thus the Steelpoort Fort, afterwards called Fort Burgers, was built and Von Schlieckmann placed in command. It overlooked a plain hemmed in by mountains, on the right by the spurs of the Lulu hills, on the left by the towering height of Mount Morone. The plain narrowed between the enclosing ranges. The outlook in certain lights was gloomy, even terrible. As Aylward, the Irish renegade put it: "Through the poort or pass, winding in and out amongst rocks, under fearful precipices, through heavy clumps of thorny bush . . . ran a small footpath that led slowly upwards into a fertile valley over which frowned the stronghold of Umsoet, the most notorious of the robber chiefs that fought for Sekukuni. . . . Hereabouts were crags and scarped

walls of granite and porphyry glittering grandly in the sun. . . ."

From his bold little six-cornered fort in this magnificent country, Von Schlieckmann and his garrison constantly raided Sekukuni and Umsoet, popping up in countless spots, intimidating them, but containing them effectually within their own lands. His adventures challenge the most improbable fiction. He was the apotheosis of daring, holding his life as cheaply as a straw.

### 3

But he was killed within three months. He left the fort in the darkness of the early morning of Friday, November 17, 1876, to attack a native village in the hills. He intended also to seize the cattle. His little force pushed on from the bottom of a gully through a glen. The stillness was profound. Lofty escarpments shut them in.

Suddenly a rifle went off by accident. Instantly a sentry's shrill scream rang out from a high ledge of rock. The wild blowing of horns and the drum-beating of vedettes echoed eerily in the dark ravines. It was followed in the greying dawn by rolling rifle fire from caves and crags. The detachment advanced boldly from point to point. It rushed the entrance to a village blocked by tree branches. Two Englishmen—Shepherd and Gilbert—pulled away the obstruction and leaped through. They fell dangerously wounded. The enemy retired far up the defile, taking cover behind rocks.

Von Schlieckmann lit a cigarette, drew his sword, and springing on a rock, cried:

"Lydenburg volunteers! Follow me!"

Suddenly, as his men rushed up, a heavy bullet, said to weigh a quarter of a pound, struck him, tearing away a portion of the liver and the backbone.

Soon after, enfiladed and overborne, the attackers retreated. They carried the dying Von Schlieckmann and other wounded back towards the fort. On the top of a rise within sight of the fort they lowered his stretcher. The Prussian put his arms around the neck of Surgeon Ashton.

"Tell the President," he gasped . . . "I was faithful . . . to the last!"

And thus died a gallant man.

#### 4

Aylward now became Commandant. He seems to have kept his unruly force of 160 men in fair control, although now and then they drank to excess. He tells a story of one of his patrolmen who became drunk in a wild spot under the very eyes of the enemy. These were astounded at his antics, especially when, thrown at last from his horse, which stood faithfully by, he lay down pointing his rifle this way and that, and finally went to sleep. They may have looked upon him as devil-possessed, or as a decoy; at any rate they left him alone.

On another occasion the garrison had had no liquor for three months. Information reached them that a cask of liquor was on its way. Constantly they watched from afar for signs of the commissariat convoy. Days passed; it did not come. At last waggons and escort were sighted, and all joyfully repaired to the canteen tent. The cask was off-loaded, and a tap inserted. The thirsty soldiery stood eagerly about. The tap was turned on, and to the horror of all, the cask was found to contain ginger beer.

The mistake all but led to a mutiny.



## 5

The garrison continued to sally forth. Columns of black smoke on the mountains—the warning signals of the tribesmen—testified to the frequency of the raids. But the diggers on the Lydenburg goldfields began to fear reprisal and roundly cursed Aylward and his garrison. They complained to the British authorities in Natal and the Cape. They spoke of ever-growing native disorder. The Press took matters up. Colour was lent to their allegations by the restiveness of Cetewayo, attributed widely by the British to the failure of the Republican Transvaal to keep its tribesmen in order.

And so Sir Theophilus Shepstone, that master-mind in native mentality, whose name to-day has overpowering significance among the Zulus, came over the border from Natal to examine this matter of native lawlessness in the Transvaal, which, he said, might end in a bloody Zulu invasion not only of the Transvaal but also of Natal.

And, satisfied that the Republic was bankrupt (there was three and sixpence in the Treasury) and at the mercy of Cetewayo and his allies, he annexed the Transvaal in the name of Queen Victoria, and ran up the British flag in Pretoria. The Transvaal was proclaimed British territory on April 12, 1877.

In the Raad at Pretoria, Burgers, broken-hearted at the turn of events, attacked his fellow-countrymen. These, advised by Paul Kruger, had for some time refused to pay taxes. "You have," Burgers said, "sold the Republic for a song. To-day a bill for £1,100 was laid before me for signature, but I would sooner have cut off my right hand than sign it, for I have not the slightest reason to expect that when the bill becomes due there will be a penny to pay it with."

He then withdrew, retired from public life, and died in the Cape.

Paul Kruger, who had fought against the authority of Burgers, his railways and his taxes, indeed had contributed heavily to his difficulties, became a fierce opponent of annexation, and through the clouds of confusion which gradually enveloped South Africa, stood forth as a powerful figure, implacably resolved to fight for a Dutch South Africa.

He went to England with Dr. E. F. P. Jorissen, State Attorney, in 1877, to try to get the annexation revoked, but returned unsuccessful.

He stumped the Transvaal. The Boers whom he addressed were mainly unlettered. Years of political unrest had kept them ignorant and superstitious. He swayed them to his will. They saw with his eyes; his power among them waxed great.

## 6

A story is told of Boer credulity which in the circumstances is significant. A certain farmer and his wife on the banks of the Little Tugela had been terrorized by strange visitations. Showers of stones, vegetables, oranges and pomegranates had thudded on their roof and inside the house in the dead of night. Sympathetic Republicans agreed to help them. They divided themselves into two parties: one keeping guard outside in the moonlight to see that nothing escaped from the house or went into it, not even a field-mouse, while the rest went inside to exorcise the demons.

Among the exorcists was an Irish ex-soldier named McCormick who was determined not to leave the place until the spirits had been driven forth. Sitting around the table, a shower of onions and pomegranates came suddenly through the roof and fell about the floor.

McCormick now stood up and in fluent Erse violently exhorted the demons to depart. In the

thick of his oration, something dropped on his head and forced him down. It was enough. The exorcists leaped to their feet, rushed from the house to their horses, and ignoring the awe-stricken farmer guards, galloped away. The guards, not certain what might now emerge from the darksome house, also bolted and left the place to its fate.

Stories of this kind were the currency of the countryside. In those days it was said that a big proportion of the population could neither read nor write and that the Bible was the only book on the farms.

Paul Kruger continued to go about, however, condemning the annexation. All that he said was believed. He quickly strengthened Dutch opinion—already fairly strong—against British interference.

And thus he set the political field for war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cetewayo, King of the Zulus, committed many provocative acts at this time, in the prevalent spirit of tribal lawlessness. Lord Chelmsford proceeded against him with four British columns, and after suffering heavy losses at Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift on July 22, 1879, defeated him at Ulundi, and finally broke the Zulu power. The cost to the Imperial British Treasury was enormous.

## CHAPTER IX

### GUNFIRE IN THE WEST

#### I

**K**RUGER'S anti-annexation campaign had its inevitable effect. Ominous rumours of war reached Pretoria in 1880. The little town—snuggled in its warm valley amid running waters—was not perturbed. Sir Owen Lanyon, the tall dark Administrator, remained the confident military martinet, scorning the possibility of revolt, wedded to his ways, smoking strong green cigars and honouring the rules of the mess. He never spoke to a Boer except through an interpreter. Unlike his predecessor, the famous Shepstone, who knew the Taal and would often be seen at Nagmaal chatting familiarly with the farmers among their waggons, Sir Owen was formal and abrupt.

On one ceremonial occasion foreign representatives called at Government House and hung up their consular "cocked" hats. But their owners were dismayed to discover later that the hats had been adorned with scarlet geraniums, the culprit being the well-known practical joker, Captain Knox of the Royal Horse Artillery. He always felt that strict Government House observance was out of place, a view with which, of course, Sir Owen was in entire disagreement.

The Boers indeed hated formality. They hated Government House. To them it suggested the heel of the invader. They were the more hostile, inasmuch as they had been promised representative government, and the promise had not been kept. Moreover, they considered that they were

being harshly taxed (Sir Owen had instituted an elaborate system of tax ledgers in the countryside) while the natives were being let off lightly.

The truth was that Boer and Briton had been steadily drifting apart.

Downing Street's ignorance of the Boers was deep, Boer ignorance of Downing Street was profound. The majority of the country folk thought of Queen Victoria as of some old lady ruling the kitchen, the pantry and the coffee-making; indeed, the late Rev. J. H. Bates actually overheard a conversation at the time of the second Boer War twenty years later between two old Boer women in Pretoria on these lines:

A: "Most of the English are very much against the war. I'm sorry for old Missis Victoria."  
(Meeste van die Engelse is baie teen die oorlog. Ak is jammer vir die ou tante Victoria.)

B: "Why?" (Hoekom?)

A: "Because she's been listening to Kimmerlain (Chamberlain) and letting the war go on. Now she can't get anybody to do the washing." (Want sy het vir Kimmerlain geluister en die oorlog laat aanhou. Nou kan sy niemand kry om vir haar te was nie.)

B: "Gracious! Is that so?" (Magtig! Is dit so?)

A: "Yes; and she has to do it herself!" (Ja; en nou moet sy dit self doen.)

The story neither flatters nor belies the level of Republican belief.

Now one result of Lanyon's unsympathetic military regime and his failure to keep in touch with country feeling, was that Kruger, strong and embittered, continued to meet with warm support for his anti-annexation campaign. He told the

burghers that the English were not mentioned in the Bible and were not wanted in the country; Dutch papers, too, clamoured for retrocession and independence; until, as Mr. John Scoble has said in his excellent "The Rise and Fall of Krugerism":<sup>1</sup>

"Secret meetings were held in 1880 in almost every village and district by the Dutch burghers. . . . Field-cornets and commandants were elected other than those appointed by the British authorities, and every arrangement made for a general rising of the population."

Yet in Pretoria they seemed to know little of it. Even when at last, on December 10, 1880, a great gathering of burghers took place at Paardekraal and stones were cast and vows registered pledging all to strive for freedom from British rule, when the small British garrisons that had been left in the Transvaal after the Zulu War of '79 were threatened with annihilation, Sir Owen Lanyon made light of it.

"We can look after ourselves," he declared, and sent reassuring messages to London.

Meanwhile, secret arrangements were being made by the Boers to besiege the small garrisons of red-coats at Potchefstroom, Lydenburg, Wakkerstroom, Pretoria, Rustenburg, Marabastad and Standerton. On December 16, a Republic was proclaimed at Heidelberg under the control of the famous triumvirate, Paul Kruger, Martinus Pretorius and Piet J. Joubert, who directed what became known as the war of 1880-1881.

## 2

One day, a body of burghers descended on a store at Middelburg and seized all the ammunition.

<sup>1</sup> "The Rise and Fall of Krugerism," by John Scoble and H. R. Abercrombie.

This was represented merely as an unpleasant incident. Then Captain Aubrey Woolls-Sampson, who felt that if a man went six months without a fight there was something wrong with him, became involved in another such "incident." He had been sent from Pretoria to Blaauwberg to collect native hut tax. He had collected a large sum throughout the Waterberg where burgher feeling had become gravely acute; but making his way back in leisurely fashion to Pretoria, he had stopped at the farm of Jan Plessis de Beer.

"I've come to collect the tax from your boys," he announced.

"You will do nothing of the kind!"

"What!" cried Woolls-Sampson, flushing and leaping from his cart.

A fight seemed imminent, but, fearing the seizure of the cart and its valuable contents—the burghers had no funds—Woolls-Sampson's assistant hurriedly intervened, and managed to patch up peace and proceed on the journey.

Commandos now began to assemble. At Potchefstroom the refusal of farmer Bezuidenhout to pay taxes led to an exchange of shots. There was excitement and galloping of armed men. General Cronje closed in on Potchefstroom. The burghers swarmed to his command.

Potchefstroom, that old capital of the Transvaal, fragrant with flowers and history, still has its fort. Little is left of it now, of course, though the remnants of it stand as a monument to Colonel R. W. C. Winsloe and his gallant red-coats who offered an immortal ninety-day resistance to Cronje and his resourceful burghers.

It was an amazing feat. Crowded into a space 25 yards square, were 322 men and a few women and children. There was a little sub-stronghold made of mealie sacks inside, 9 feet square and 5 feet high, for the women and children. At the

foot of it was a hole for them to creep in and out. Here for three months, cramped beyond belief, the women and children lived uncomplainingly. Unable to take exercise and constantly under gunfire, they nevertheless sang when the red-coats sang—as they often did during the shooting.

This story of brave men and women is little remembered to-day; why, it is difficult to say, but redounding as it does to the glory of British arms and in many respects to the chivalry of the Boers, it deserves to be taught as an epic of history.

The story begins with an informal call one day by Colonel Winsloe on Sir Owen Lanyon at Pretoria. Sir Owen, who must have surmised that serious events were pending, sounded no warning, merely instructed the Colonel to take over the Potchefstroom command. The Colonel left Pretoria on December 9, 1880. We may picture him jolting along on his hundred-mile journey in a buck-waggon drawn by twelve mules. He jogged on in happy ignorance of events ahead. While he knew that the Boers resented bitterly the annexation of the Transvaal, that Kruger had been leading a movement to rescind the annexation, he had no idea that the Dutch were planning to reoccupy their old capital Potchefstroom on December 16, 1880, Dingaan's Day, four days after he actually arrived. Unconcernedly, therefore, he crossed rivers on the way, slept in his waggon the first night, and in his tent the second, and no doubt felt very like an adventurer in a foreign land. He encountered a few friendly wayfarers.

"What!" exclaimed one. "Not stopped yet? Why, the country's full of armed men. They're off even now to a big meeting at Paardekraal!"

He arrived unmolested, however, at Potchefstroom, then a scattered town of cottages, trees, spreading gardens, white walls and orchards, a



place with a mellow beauty of its own. He saw the officers. They plied him with questions.

"What's going on?" they asked.

"Sir Owen told me nothing."

But his military instinct was sound; he began the construction of a fort. And his men worked on it with a will.

### 3

The British officers wore vivid uniforms of scarlet and gold. They loved dancing and the company of pretty women. And in Potchefstroom there lived the Chevalier Forssman, able to claim descent from the Nordic kings, who kept open house, had a keen idea of politics, and some charming daughters. The officers indeed, danced the evenings away, the few evenings between them and the coming tragedy.

On December 15 came the first local evidence of war. Boers came galloping into the town. A married daughter of the Chevalier, making cakes in her kitchen, was ordered by her father to take refuge in the barely completed fort. She abandoned her cake-making and fled there with her two little girls. Colonel Winsloe's perplexities were increased by the arrival of other women refugees. He found himself in charge of 322 people who had somehow contrived to squeeze themselves within the ramparts. Outside, the Boers had many hundreds of riflemen.

The siege began. Firing became intense not only against the fort but also against the landdrost's fortified office and the gaol where the rest of the British garrison held out. Captain Falls was shot dead through the door of the landdrost's office, and, the place being pervious to bullets and incapable of defence, his men had to surrender. That night Colonel Winsloe hoisted a lantern on

the ramparts of the fort as a signal to the defenders of the prison to retire on the fort, and this they did in the darkness, bringing their wounded with them.

Kruger anxiously watched the progress of events from Heidelberg. Rhodes also, entering Parliament as the youthful member for Barkly West, near Kimberley, watched the war no less anxiously, firm in his imperial ideals.

## 4

The water shortage became acute. A well dug to thirty feet yielded nothing.

"Twenty-five pounds to the man who finds water!" cried the Colonel. And forthwith every man became a digger. Meanwhile the red-coats dared forth at night with the water-carts to the furrows twelve hundred yards away. The rumbling of the carts could be heard for miles. That the Boers did not capture them—although they fired on them—is a comment on the early looseness of the investiture. Subsequently it tightened up.

One night, the Boers caught a number of horses and rode away with them. A wag in the fort blew a bugle, sounding the charge. Immediately was heard the gallop of hoofs. The animals came tearing back with the Boers on their backs. But so grave did the water position become that the animals had to be freed. They trotted off to the furrows and were caught by the burghers.

All except one! Lieutenant the Hon. Geoffrey Wykeham Fiennes, who subsequently became Lord Saye and Sele, refused to part with his polo mare. His batman used to creep out night after night to cut grass for it, and on his return the lieutenant fed it from his hand. . . . But at last

the well-sinkers struck water—and the defenders felt that the worst of their difficulties was over.

One day the Boers brought up a ship's cannon. Some of its projectiles were compounded of tin cans and bits of metal. They protected this weird weapon—called by the defenders "brother blunderbuss"—with sacks and earth-filled casks. They did their best with it to smash the ramparts of the fort, but as fast as friend blunderbuss made a breach the defenders closed it with filled sacks sewn by the brave needlewomen of the fort. The business of repairing the ramparts had to be done at night in the face of heavy fire. Everything was in favour of the burgher riflemen, particularly the long grass which grew to the height of standing corn right up to the walls.

But brother blunderbuss was not allowed to go unpunished. He was smitten day and night by the two British nine-pounders, and his protective mealie sacks and earth barrels were often blown into the air.

One night while Colonel Winsloe's servant was holding a basin of washing water for him in his tent, a dropping shot smashed the man's arm. So low were the walls of the fort that the tent tops were visible, the candlelight enabling them to be seen and fired on at night. An immediate operation was deemed necessary. The surgeon administered an anæsthetic. As Colonel Winsloe afterwards said:

"It was pitch dark and silence reigned, as usual, in our little community when the doctor began his share of the night's work, which, of course, required a light. This made visible to the enemy the upper part of the tent. They directed their fire upon it. The operation to be performed was the amputation of the arm above the elbow. Bullets were whizzing through the tent top. The

patient lay on the amputating table. . . . But nobody was hit. The man recovered. . . ."<sup>\*</sup>

The Boers played many grim tricks on the defenders. They donned red coats. They also caused lights to flash like rockets in the mountains to the accompaniment of distant gunfire. This was done to persuade the British that relief columns were coming to their aid. They thus hoped to trick the exhausted defenders into the open. But every subterfuge failed. The defenders hung on.

A young wife died. A truce was arranged while a coffin smothered in flowers was brought from the town into the fort. A round shot terminated the truce as the body was lowered into the grave. . . . Stray shots, dysentery and gangrene carried off many others. Food supplies ran low. Brother blunderbuss continued to breach the sand-bagged walls. Volleys were fired into the breaches.

## 5

One night, a mysterious enemy deserter came in. He was found under a waggon wheel and was brought into a dark magazine sap. His teeth chattered so, either from cold or fear, that his story proved unintelligible; and when a sentry—not wishing to leave the Colonel unguarded even with this stranger—stole up behind him with a bayonet, he became speechless. He was seized and stripped. To the amazement and delight of officers and men he was found to be swathed in long ropes of tobacco. Even his pockets were stuffed with it. Not knowing what to make of it all the Colonel ordered him to be handcuffed and chained to a

<sup>\*</sup> In the course of the siege the Boers on one occasion lent stretchers and sent fruit for the wounded, and some carbolic acid asked for by the British surgeon. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe wrote: "We thanked the Boer commander for his thought. . . . Civilities like these take the sting off warfare, and I must say the Boers were never behind in such things. They are a fine, manly, sturdy race, such as I should like to live among. Who can blame them for fighting for their independence? We at least did not."

wagon wheel. He was nevertheless destined to prove most useful.

It happened this way. The garrison had been besieged for ninety days and had suffered a loss in killed and wounded of one in three persons. Everybody was starving; all were longing for relief, for news. In these circumstances the eccentric purveyor of tobacco, whom the Colonel at first deemed a spy, undertook to go into Potchefstroom for news. Permission was granted. He managed to get through the investing forces and into town, where he picked up several newspapers and useful scraps of information. Then he crept back to the fort. He was fired at by his countrymen as he did so.

The surprise of the defenders may be imagined when they discovered on reading the newspapers that an armistice was everywhere in force between General Sir Evelyn Wood and Commandant General Joubert, to enable Kruger to "arrange his peace proposals." They knew nothing about it. Cronje had treacherously withheld this news from Winsloe and was prosecuting the siege as rigorously as ever.

The Colonel accordingly wrote to Cronje insisting on proper observance of the armistice. Cronje refused. Thereupon Colonel Winsloe, feeling that his men were reduced to the lowest ebb, and that his armistice rations were being withheld, agreed to an honourable surrender. Afterwards, in consequence of Cronje's trick in declining to recognize the armistice, the Boer triumvirate cancelled the capitulation, and Potchefstroom was for a while reoccupied by British troops.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is arguable that Cronje acted reasonably within the terms of the armistice which contained one extraordinary condition, namely, that the armistice was not to commence until British convoys sent from Natal with eight days provisions, for each garrison besieged, had arrived; so that even if Cronje *had* carried out the conditions fully and notified them at once to Colonel Winsloe, fighting would not have stopped, the convoys having been delayed by swollen rivers. Cronje was in error, however, in failing to notify the British commander of the armistice and its terms.

When the siege was over Colonel Winsloe agreed—mistakenly as some thought—to dine with Cronje in the town. It was a queer dinner. The walls were lined three feet deep with burghers standing with their rifles. Bearded heads were thrust through the windows. General Cronje, carried away doubtless by emotion and champagne, proposed, "Success to the Boer arms!"

"I told my hearers," Colonel Winsloe said afterwards, "that the sentiment was one to which I could not respond . . . but I proposed the health of General Cronje and his officers who had lately been our enemies but were now our friends. . . . There was applause and hammering of rifles on the floor. . . . General Cronje gave me his hand across the table. . . ."

All the other garrisons held out elsewhere in the Transvaal.

Thus ended the historic siege.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FATEFUL MARCH OF THE NINETY-FOURTH

#### I

MEANWHILE the Ninety-Fourth was marching to Pretoria from Lydenburg, that region of frowning mountains and valleys where Schlieckmann the Prussian had lost his life. The intention was to strengthen the garrison at Pretoria.

The red-coats rested for a night or so at Middelburg, sun-scorched men recking so little of war that Mrs. Sam Wemmer, who became one of the pioneer women of the Rand goldfields, said shortly before her death on February 26, 1933, "How the officers loved dancing and how little war seemed to concern them! They danced with us in the jumpy military fashion of the time. We only danced in the plain Dutch way. Colonel Anstruther, the dark handsome commander, was as gay as any. We cleared our main store in Middelburg—we kept everything there from a plough to a needle—and gave them a big dinner. Many famous people had come to that store; President Burgers had stayed there; General Joubert had come to see him there; and I remember well how Shepstone, the Natal man who annexed the Transvaal, once opened his coat to show us his wonderful new uniform with its stars and bands. . . .

"But the regiment soon left for Pretoria and we were sorry. Before they went the regimental doctor spent the night watching at the bedside of my sick child. So my husband gave him a crate of singing veldt birds. He also warned the

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colonel: 'Don't go. You'll be shot down on the way!'

"But the colonel only smiled."

2

The Ninety-Fourth swung out smartly along the road. The sun was unclouded, the orchards laden with fruit. The soldiers filled their pockets with peaches. The band played and the Tommies sang, as, marching at ease in column of route, they approached Bronkhorstspuit.

In the old and rare *News of the Camp* issued during the siege of Pretoria there is an account of how the column arrived at Bronkhorstspuit on December 20, 1880, and of the disaster that befell it there. It was related in Pretoria by one of the red-coats wounded in the subsequent fight.

"The country on our right was undulating, and on our left rose gradually from the road. Bush surrounded us on all sides. The band was playing 'Kiss me, mother, kiss your darling' as we marched confidently along, never for one moment dreaming that harm was nigh. Suddenly the alarm was raised that Boers were surrounding us. The band still played on for some distance, but the companies were immediately halted. Colonel Anstruther, seeing hostile horsemen on the crest of the hill, gave temporary command to Captain Nairne whilst he went to confer with the Boer leader who was seen advancing *with a white flag*. During his absence the companies . . . were told off into sections and half companies. . . . Meanwhile a stampede took place among the oxen. . . . It hampered our movements. The Boers were now gradually forming a semi-circle round us. Our front faced a small bush-covered hill where they were first observed. Our right was completely outflanked. It was pretty



clear that our rear was in danger. . . . Every man was fully cognisant of our critical position. Strategy was useless. . . .”

The Boers meanwhile had completed their tactical dispositions and were now in every direction within short firing distance of the halted red-coats. There can be no question but that:

- (1) The column was insufficiently protected by scouts, and that there was tragical negligence on the part of the Commanding Officer, who notwithstanding more than one warning, including a very definite one from Colonel Bellairs from Pretoria, marched into a trap.
- (2) Also, that while the white flag was flying the farmers completed their fateful dispositions.

Then the shooting began. From the rocks and hills came the fierce crackle of rifle fire. The red-coats fell in scores. Mrs. Smith, widow of the bandmaster who had died at Lydenburg, rushed to the help of those who were bleeding to death. Under fire she tore up her dress for bandages. If woman ever won the Victoria Cross, she won it that day!

May her name live for ever with the heroines of war!

As Colonel Anstruther lay dying in his tent—his legs were shattered—he was visited by Franz Joubert, the Boer commandant.

“Will you drink a glass of champagne with me?” the Colonel whispered.

They drank together.

“Here’s to the health of Queen Victoria,” said Joubert, once more raising his glass: then added: “May she live long and take her soldiers from the Transvaal!”

Two days later the Colonel died.

Old Mrs. Wemmer, thin and fragile, recalled striking memories of the field fifty years after. "We heard in Middelburg that the red-coats had been shot down, so we took our waggon, inspanned, and went towards Bronkhorstspuit. . . . We drove in the sun for four hours. Then we came to the spot. We saw the tree by which Colonel Anstruther had stood when he was shot. Several bullets had hit it before he fell. We saw blood everywhere where the soldiers had dropped. It had flowed into the crevices of the sloping road. We saw the crowded tents that had been quickly put up there for the wounded. And we came at last upon the doctor working. He was very sad and tired. My husband said to him: 'You can't go on like this, doctor. You've neither medicines nor brandy. Let me send you these things and provisions.'

"Yes, if we may pay for them.'

"We went back to Middelburg and filled a waggon with brandy and provisions. There was £600 worth of goods. We got the waggon back to the camp. The British kept their word. They paid us £600."

The graves of the red-coats are still to be seen. Peach trees have grown up among them. They are laden with fruit in summer time, fruit that sprang from the peaches in the pockets of those who had marched along singing to the music of the band.

There were notable incidents in the other sieges. At Standerton, with Major Montague in command, the British garrison made a dummy gun with four rifles under it, their triggers connected by string. At Lydenburg the little garrison refused to surrender. Aylward, who had succeeded Schlieckmann in command of Fort Burgers in the

Sekukuni war, fought against the British at Lydenburg and vainly urged Lieutenant Long and Father Walsh to surrender with their men. "We shall fight while a man is left" replied Lieutenant Long. Father Walsh added: "I am not a coward. I will not lose hope while a man is alive."

At Wakkerstroom 60 British soldiers, 30 volunteers and 50 coloured men held out. The besiegers got two ships' cannon and fired iron taken from the Erstelling Gold Mine, doing damage at 1,000 yards.

But all the forts held out except Potchefstroom, where, as we have seen, Colonel Winsloe had been refused the privileges of armistice.

## 4

The murder of Captain Elliott of the Ninety-Fourth, the only officer not wounded at Bronkhorstspuit, was probably the worst episode of the '81 war. He and Captain R. H. Lambart of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers had been taken prisoners on separate occasions after that engagement, and had been ordered to cross the Vaal together by a specified drift into the Orange Free State and to take no further part in the war. They were accordingly escorted to the river, then in flood, by two Boers, who, being unable to find the proper drift, left them to find it themselves. The officers vainly drove up and down the river-bank with their cart and horses seeking a ford by which to cross. For three days they searched until at last they were stopped by two armed men. These handed them an official letter expressing surprise that they had broken their parole and had failed to leave the Transvaal. They were arrested forthwith and taken to a

farmhouse where they came before the local commandant.

Captain Lambart's report to the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir George Pomeroy Colley, gives a vivid account of the circumstances in which Captain Elliott was murdered:

"The Commandant now ordered us to start at once from the farm for the river drift. As it was getting dark I asked him if we could not start early next morning. . . . He refused.

"It became pitch dark with vivid lightning, the river roaring past and, I knew, impassable. I again asked if we had not better wait till the morning. He replied, 'No, cross at once.' I drove my horses into the river, where they immediately fell, lifted them, and drove them on about six yards when we fell into a hole: got them out with difficulty and advanced another yard, when we got stuck against a rock. The current was now so strong and the drift so deep, that my cart was turned on its side and the water rushed over the seat. I called to the commandant on the bank that we were stuck, and to send assistance, or might we return, to which he replied: 'If you do, we will shoot you.' Turning to Captain Elliott who was sitting beside me I said: 'We must swim for it,' and asked if he could swim, to which he replied, 'Yes.' I said, 'If you can't I will stick to you, for I can.'

"While we were holding this conversation a volley from the bank ten or fifteen yards off was fired into us, the bullets passing through the hood of my cart. One must have mortally wounded poor Elliott, who only uttered the single word 'Oh,' and fell headlong into the river. I immediately sprang in after him, but was swept down the river by the current. On gaining the surface I could see nothing of Elliott. I called his name twice but got no reply.

"Immediately another volley was fired, making the water hiss where the bullets struck. I now swam for the opposite bank, which I reached with great difficulty in ten minutes. I stuck fast in the deep black mud, but eventually reached the top of the bank and ran for 2,000 yards under heavy fire. The night was pitch dark and lit every minute by vivid lightning which showed the enemy my whereabouts."

It is only fair to state that the Boer leaders, Kruger, Pretorius and Joubert, expressed the utmost abhorrence of the crime. Two burghers were subsequently tried for murder in August, 1881, at Pretoria, but were acquitted on the curious ground that Captain Lambart had misrepresented the circumstances.

## 5

In Pretoria, the garrison under the command of Colonel Bellairs held out, making sorties, and suffering losses. The Boers held tactical points from three to ten miles out, points identifiable frequently by their signal fires at night. The dark drama was relieved by occasional flashes of comedy. Captain Woolls-Sampson, taking advantage of the looseness of the investiture, went out one day with a patrol towards Schoemann's farm. He saw in the distance a low wall and over it to his amazement a mysterious yellow head with thin outstanding ears surmounted by a dilapidated top-hat. As several bullets zipped in his direction, Woolls-Sampson took cover, borrowed a rifle and shot off the hat, whereupon to the astonishment of the patrol a bull, which had been looking over the wall at some cows in adjoining lands, dashed away prancing, tossing and bellowing. The farmer, it seems, anxious to protect a valuable animal from the sun and having

no straw hat, had utilised this relic of forgotten glory, had bored holes in the brim and tied it to the animal's head and horns.

The farmer came rushing towards the patrol.

"Machtig!" he yelled: "Why are you firing at my bull?"

"If you dress your bulls like British governors you must expect it," was the angry retort.

And Woolls-Sampson, much annoyed, went back to Pretoria.<sup>1</sup>

## 6

Sir George Colley began his advance from Natal to the relief of the beleaguered garrisons with 1,400 men—a thoroughly inadequate force. He pitched his camp at Ingogo, was defeated there as well as at Laings Nek, and took a force of 552 men to the top of Majuba, a formidable mountain overlooking the Boer camp. Here the famous battle occurred, in which he lost his life.

The battle may be followed quite easily if Majuba is likened to the knuckles of a man's right fist, the thumb being held under the forefinger. The British force—in red coats and white helmets—magnificent marks for Boer riflemen—climbed the steep slopes, which might be represented by the muscle between thumb and forefinger, and settled in the hollow between the knuckle of the first and second fingers. Meanwhile some seventy Boers were lying unperceived in thick bush as at the wrist of the hand. These were able to see the British though the British could not see them. On the other side of the imaginary hand the Boers had climbed up unperceived, hidden indeed by the ridge represented by the right edge of the hand. In this site they

<sup>1</sup> Related to the author in 1909 by Lt-Colonel Sir Aubrey Woolls-Sampson

had breakfasted. When they eventually got over the ridge they were able to advance unseen towards the British camp under cover of the depressions represented by the other knuckles. At last their chance came. Firing over the top of the joint of the second finger down into the camp, they had the British at their mercy. Then, as the red-coats vainly sought cover, they were shot down by the marksmen concealed in the bushes near the wrist. They suffered a loss of 92 killed and 134 wounded. Sir George Colley fell grasping his ivory-handled revolver. Although the forces engaged were small, so small indeed that had the fight occurred during the Great War it would probably have passed unnoticed, yet it was admittedly a disaster to the British arms, one, indeed, as markedly to the credit of Republican arms as it was to the discredit of British leadership that fatal day.

Sir Evelyn Wood had meanwhile arrived at Newcastle with reinforcements, and Sir Frederick (afterwards Lord) Roberts was on the way out to the Cape with 10,000 men.

But the Gladstone cabinet was resolved on peace, and peace was concluded on March 21, 1881, a peace which virtually gave the Transvaal back to the Dutch, and provoked bitter outbursts from the British in South Africa. Sir Owen Lanyon wrote from Pretoria on March 29, 1881. "Last night the saddest news I ever received in my life came in the shape of a letter from Wood. . . . After three Secretaries of State, three High Commissioners and two Houses of Commons had said that the country should not be given back, it seems a terrible want of good faith to the loyalists that it has been decided to do so. The scene this morning was heart-breaking. The women who have behaved splendidly all through the siege of Pretoria were

crying and wringing their hands in their great grief; the children were hushed as in a chamber of death; and the men were completely bowed down in their sorrow—well they might for the news brought ruin to many and great loss to all."

The British flag was dragged through the dust by outraged Englishmen and solemnly buried. But the word "Resurgam" on the grave, bespoke the hopes of the burial party! A burning effigy of Gladstone almost set fire to the tents of the camp.

Kruger, greatly relieved by Gladstone's unexpected surrender, addressed the Volksraad at Heidelberg thus:

"President and members of the Volksraad, I have called you together as representatives of the people to inform you of what has been done by the Government since it was entrusted on December 13, 1880, at Paardekraal . . . with the task of doing everything necessary for the restoration of independence.

"I consider it my duty to declare plainly before you and before the whole world, that our respect for Her Majesty the Queen of England, for the Government of Her Majesty and for the English nation, has never been greater than at this time when we are enabled by this treaty to show you the proof of England's noble and magnanimous love of right and justice. . . ."

Kruger went on to state that an important part in the regulation of the affairs of the Transvaal had been left to a Royal Commission, and expressed confidence in its findings, and the hope that all inhabitants of the Transvaal would henceforth abstain from anything which would "lead to the perpetuation of that feeling of hostility which must now and ever be eradicated."

Kruger was made President of the Republic



in 1883. From then on he thought constantly of a dominant Afrikander nation.

Rhodes, implacably resolved on a united Southern Africa under the British flag, was thrusting ahead in the Cape Parliament. "The war," he said, "will teach both sides to respect each other." As a direct result of the defeat of the British armies, the exultant Dutch introduced a bill in the Cape House providing for the use of the Dutch language in the debates. Rhodes supported a motion—speaking with unusual warmth and eloquence—for postponement of discussion of the measure until the following session when it was hoped that the unfortunate racial feelings aroused by the war would have abated.

Meanwhile he thought more and more of the unclaimed territories north of the Transvaal. He determined at all costs to keep open the Bechuanaland corridor leading up to them, notwithstanding that Kruger was in the ascendant in the Transvaal and that British prestige had suffered.

He determined to secure those territories for the Empire.

## CHAPTER XI

### GERMANY FORCES THE ISSUE

#### I

THE two great protagonists, Kruger and Rhodes—grown increasingly masterful with the years—were about to begin their long duel. Rhodes in his struggle for the overlordship of the diamond world had already proved himself a master of men. In that interesting book, "African Treasures," by Mr. W. P. Taylor, is a picture of him in a characteristically autocratic mood, a picture which describes his anger one day with the directors of De Beers for failing to negotiate with the prospectors Ward and Armstrong for the purchase of their newly-discovered Wesselton diamond mine. Resolved on a diamond monopoly and afraid of the establishment of rival interests, he was sitting back in his chair, looking at the ceiling and speaking with ill-suppressed rancour:

"Directors of De Beers, I am leaving for Rhodesia in the morning. I am worried and very tired. We have reached a point where there is need for action, and I find you quarrelling with men who are my friends. . . ."

In the end Rhodes got his way, as he always did, and bought the mine which has since produced millions of pounds' worth of diamonds. He forged ahead. He became Prime Minister of the Cape on July 17, 1887, at the age of thirty-four, and master of De Beers in the following year when he beat the reluctant Barney Barnato an amalgamation of the diamond interests of Griqua-

land West. The amalgamated De Beers was registered in 1888, a mighty move which attuned the diamond output to the needs of the world market. It prevented over-production and saved the diamond mines.

## 2

Kruger was equally autocratic. The enormous force of his will enabled him constantly to dominate the Raad as the supreme autocrat of Afrikanerdom. On one occasion when the Raad rejected a motion to confer on him absolute power to act during the period when it was not sitting, he tore off his green sash of office and kicked it off the platform, waved his arms and roared like a lion. He threatened to resign, a customary threat which never failed. Members who hurried along to appease him were twice sent staggering back with powerful thrusts. Kruger simply would not be mollified. So the Chairman adjourned the Raad. In the interval the members flocked to the President's private room where they expressed regret at what had occurred. Oom Paul, puffing furiously at his pipe, began at last to relent. Two hours later the Raad reassembled with the gratifying news that the great man was more amenable, and hastened to vote again on the rejected motion, which was put first on the order paper. It was passed unanimously. As Mr. David M. Wilson put it in his "Behind the Scenes in the Transvaal," "I understood for the first time what President Kruger meant by always speaking of *my* Raad, *my* burghers. He possessed them in every sense of the word."

## 3

Kruger made journeys to London and Europe. He had great and definite aims—chief of which was

the establishment of a railway extending from Delagoa Bay to Angra Pequena. The line of this project crossed at right angles the Cape-Cairo scheme of Rhodes and made a literal cross of Africa. On that cross was afterwards nailed the body of the national goodwill.

The annexation of the Transvaal on April 12, 1877, led Kruger and Dr. Jorissen overseas in that year to protest. The protest proved abortive. Then the victory of the Boers in the 1880-1 war led to the signing of the Pretoria Convention on August 3, 1881, an agreement by which England retained suzerain rights, the right to march troops through the Transvaal in time of war, to control the Transvaal's foreign relations, and to appoint a Resident. Even this link with Britain, however, was resented, so that in February 27, 1884, President Kruger, General N. J. Smit and S. J. du Toit found themselves in London as signatories to the London Convention. This cancelled Britain's right to march troops through the Transvaal, and reduced her powers of control of the Transvaal's foreign affairs.

The point of all this, however, is that the President was being brought into contact with the most powerful personalities of Europe, with the courts of kings and the remorseless game of international politics. He was fêted at Antwerp, Rotterdam, Lisbon, the Hague and Berlin.

Incidentally, as showing the atmosphere in which he moved, it is recorded that at a Berlin banquet at which Wilhelm I and Bismarck were present, one of Kruger's men, General Smit, was describing how the burghers had shot down the British during the war. Bismarck gruffly suggested that a different story might have been told had Disraeli (whom he greatly admired) been in power.

Kruger's visit to Lisbon at this time, however, strengthened his hold on railway interests with the Portuguese in Africa, and put him in a better position to expand eastwards to Mozambique as leader of a trans-continental Boer Republic.

## 4

It was in 1884 that Kruger's emissaries crossed the Western border of the Transvaal into Bechuanaland and founded the two little republics, Stellaland and Goschen. This, of course, closed Rhodes's corridor from the Cape to the north. Rhodes resolved to fight. He fought invincibly. From Mankrowane, Chief of the Batlapin of Southern Bechuanaland, he first secured a cession of a large tract of territory representing about half of Bechuanaland. It was a bold move. But the Cape Parliament refused to accept the cession.

"I look on this Bechuanaland territory," Rhodes protested warmly, "as the Suez Canal of the trade of the country, the key to the interior. . . . On its acceptance or rejection depends the question whether this colony is to be confined to its present borders or to be the dominant state in South Africa."

But nothing availed. So finding all remonstrance vain, he appealed to the Imperial Government, which agreed to assume control of Bechuanaland provided the Cape Government bore half the cost of administration: but the Cape declined even that: and it looked as if Kruger would succeed in effectually closing the corridor, and in building an impassable rampart across Africa.

Germany now took a hand. She established herself in South-West Africa. She over-rode all

concessions granted by Chief Kamaherero to the English hunter Robert Lewis (Ka Robbie); and though the latter struggled grimly for his rights, and even appealed at the last to Lord Salisbury, who said, "We can't afford to go to war with Germany!" he was superseded by the Kaiser's men and eventually banished over the border. He met his death on the frontier after a fight with a leopard.

It was the seizure of the coastal strip by the Germans that awakened England from her lethargy. Rhodes was profoundly disturbed by it. He insisted in a memorable speech in the Cape Parliament that German ambition would not stop at Angra Pequena. "Even if the Transvaal Republic had Bechuanaland," he said, speaking with great earnestness, "she would not be allowed to keep it. Bismarck would make trouble with the Transvaal. Germany would come across from her settlement at Angra Pequena, and there would be a Germany from Angra Pequena to Delagoa Bay. What is the use of a few sand heaps at Angra Pequena to Germany?"

Rhodes did not mince matters. His campaign for the corridor, supported as it was by the High Commissioner of the Cape, Sir Hercules Robinson, made a considerable impression in England, so that eventually in September, 1885, Bechuanaland was taken under British protection, and the road to the north kept open. Thus Rhodes won the first round.

Rhodes met Kruger personally for the first time in January, 1885, at Barkly West. The two men, it is said, regarded each other with considerable interest.

"The ox," mused Kruger afterwards, "is slower than the racehorse: but it draws the greater load!"

The remark was to prove prophetic. For while

Rhodes won vast tracts for the Empire in the brief course of his lifetime, Dutch Nationalism has made ceaseless progress since, and, as some think, became the dominant force in Southern Africa a few years after the conclusion of the Great War.

## CHAPTER XII

### MURPHY'S MASK AND THE LAW

#### I

**B**EFORE describing the mighty discovery in 1886 of the Rand goldfields 35 miles south of Pretoria—an amazing romance, which brought Rhodes into yet sharper conflict with Kruger—let us try to throw some light on the curiously complex Anglo-Dutch race relationships prevailing in the Transvaal in the 'eighties. To understand them is to understand much of the racial trouble which continued to develop.

In 1880 no less than 250 soldiers deserted from the British garrisons, involving the authorities in a capital loss of £50,000. Accordingly, mounted patrols were stationed on the roads leading from the camps, and a reward of five pounds was offered for the capture of a deserter. Sometimes fugitives were trailed for a hundred miles, sometimes they lost their lives—as when two artillerymen died from exposure on the veld between Potchefstroom and the diamond fields, towards which they had evidently been heading.

Lady Bellairs mentions an episode in her book "The Transvaal War"<sup>1</sup> in which a Dutch girl harboured a British deserter with whom she was in love. The look-out officer in charge of the mounted patrols felt certain that the soldier was being hidden on her father's farm. He accordingly rapped at the homestead door and insisted on being admitted. At first he could only see the daughter

<sup>1</sup> Published by William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London.



of the house, then looked up the chimney, espied the man's boots, and pulled him down covered with soot. Afterwards it transpired that the poor fellow had arranged to marry the girl and to settle on the farm.

## 2

One deserter, ex-private Murphy, became Republican executioner. Pretorian justice in the 'eighties, it seems, had no animus against Irishmen. The good burghers of the sun-city through which the runnels tinkled and flashed all day with a refreshing sense of coolness, deemed Murphy quite a fit and proper person to uphold the dignity of their law.

A story is told of Murphy, who like Ko Ko in *The Mikado*:

Wafted by a favouring gale  
As one sometimes is in trances  
To a height that few can scale  
Save by long and weary dances. . . .

evinced a certain sombre pride in his office, in which respect, indeed, he also resembled Calcraft and Marwood the British hangmen. His speech was slow—like the workings of his mind.

Executions took place then virtually in public. The prison scaffold stood on the site of the present Mint and was encircled by a stone wall. Long before six o'clock on Saturday mornings—the hour and day appointed for hangings—sightseers had appropriated the best seats on the wall. They beguiled the interval with coffee.

Murphy would then appear with the condemned, who would accompany him up the ladder to the gallows where, after pulling the lever, he would watch with fatherly solicitude the unhappy descent of his victim into the pit.

One day it occurred to the burghers that a little more dignity ought to mark these occasions. It was accordingly decreed that the executioner must wear a mask. The proposal was met sympathetically by Murphy. When, however, the next execution took place, the burghers were horrified to see him on the scaffold in a Father Christmas mask and long white beard! All were too upset to intervene, and the execution was duly carried out. Murphy was so surprised when the irate burghers called upon him afterwards to explain, that he was acquitted of purposeful impropriety. As he pointed out, he had been asked to put on a mask and had obtained the only one in Pretoria—with beard to match.

Another deserter from the British garrison forces was one who drifted into criminal ways—Sutherland the bank robber. The day came when he was arraigned before Mr. Justice Kotze in Pretoria, on a charge of “blowing” a safe at Rustenburg. Sutherland was a big man with an enormous moustache. He had, it seemed, transported the safe into a plantation and dynamited it there at his ease. He removed all the gold coin and notes, leaving such trifles as cheques and silver scattered around. The jury found him guilty and a long record of misdemeanour having been proved, his Lordship sentenced him to twelve years.

Sutherland cleared his throat and seemed to be about to speak. A sympathetic court awaited some touching apologia from the old recidivist.

“Toss you double or quits, my Lord!” he said at last.

His Lordship dipped his pen ominously into the ink.

“An extra three years for contempt of court!” he observed.

Sutherland became an object of interest later on to the Jameson raiders, who, when lodged in

Pretoria jail in 1896, repeatedly heard him complain that a sporting joke from the dock had met with a disastrous reception from a Dutch Judge who was "no sportsman."

## 3

The 1880-81 war is said to have inspired Japie Deventer, the notorious horse thief who fought in the campaign, with a love of horses that simply would not be denied. He saw the horses of the King's Dragoon Guards foolishly sold two months before the outbreak of war, and the regiment itself transferred to India. He had never seen finer animals. He used to say, "If I see a bad rider on a good horse, I've got to steal it!" He would haunt the British camps and fondle the horses.

His prison-breaking proclivities landed him at last in chains. Fettered thus, he was sent one day to work in the stables of the Staats Artillery in Pretoria, stables full of fine horses with a dreamy jailer standing in the doorway looking out on a sunny world. There was a sudden commotion, a thudding of hoofs, and clanking of chains, and the jailer shot forward on his face.

The prisoner escaped. He dropped his chains across his horse's neck, and galloped off like the wind. The hue and cry was of no avail, the man had gone. He was recaptured at Heidelberg, eighty miles or so south of Pretoria, while trying to sell stolen horses. His chains had disappeared.

Taken under escort then to Johannesburg he was locked up, the jailer remarking as he looked at his double-locks, "Well, he won't get out of *that* in a hurry!"

Forthwith an escort was summoned from Pretoria to take him back to the chain gang there, and in due course a squad of Staats Artillerymen arrived. When they went to the jail for their

prisoner, however, the cell was empty. A hole in the wall told the story. However, he was once more arrested at Krugersdorp and brought to Johannesburg where the anxious jailer kept a more than ever vigilant eye on him until the squad again appeared from Pretoria.

"Well," said the squadron leader a trifle cynically, "is Japie really inside this time?"

"He is," said the jailer.

He was. In the late afternoon the squadron set out for Pretoria. They had two prisoners, Deventer the jail breaker, and a native under sentence of death. The escort took eight hours to do the journey and arrived at the jail long after dark. The squadron leader dismounted and knocked at the prison door. A long time elapsed before the bolts were drawn, and a number of sleepy officials lurched out with lanterns. They went forth to make certain of the prisoners, when lo! it was discovered that Deventer's horse was riderless! Once more he had escaped.

A lengthy period elapsed before he was re-arrested, but when he was, he was set to work on the roof of a tower in full view of the prison officials. The good artillerymen used to go and look at him, remarking, "a pity the fellow wasn't put up there before: he wouldn't have given us all this trouble!"

One day General Piet Joubert, the victor at Majuba, Commandant of the Prison (and incidentally the great political rival of President Kruger) came to inspect the prison. He tethered his horse to the base of a lofty telegraph pole which rose by the side of the tower. While the General was on his rounds, Deventer, from the edge of the roof, made a daring leap for the telegraph pole. He clasped it, slid down it, chains and all, quickly untied General Joubert's horse, and rode off into the wilderness.

His end is not known—it is assumed that the burghers found means to lock him up in perpetuity and that he died in jail. Whatever it was, his numerous escapes were certainly a comment on the laxity of jail administration in his day. And he used to date most of his troubles from his admiration for the horses of the British dragoons.

## 4

These considerations bring us naturally to thoughts of the Republican courts—to the attempts made to invest court proceedings with dignity and to raise them above race bias.

It was Judge Burgers who, when on the Lydenburg goldfields in 1883, gave what is probably the strangest judgment in history. The wild Britons and conditions of the place did not perturb him: what did exasperate him was the constant crowing of a cock. It interfered with the dignity of the proceedings. He ordered the rooster to be brought before him. The Messenger strode forth and returned with the bird which His Lordship solemnly sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out, the Messenger wringing its neck and reporting formally that the law had taken its course.

Incidentally in the early Republican days it is to be feared the native often got scant justice. Mr. Charles Leonard used to tell a story of the visit of a judicial commission to the Zoutpansberg, with a Republican Commissioner appointed to try all who had been concerned in certain disturbances. The Commissioner had power to impose the death sentence, but the condemned were to have the right of appeal. One man on being found guilty and sentenced to death promptly noted an appeal through his legal adviser.

"What's to be done now?" queried the Registrar. "He has noted an appeal."

"We'll hang him provisionally," replied the Commissioner. And hanged he was.

The case of Chief Justice Kotze (supported by Mr. Justice Ameshof) who stood up with such amazing firmness to President Kruger in the case of Brown versus the State (both were dismissed from office for doing so) is an example of Republican judges setting principles before racial bias.

The case arose out of an interesting set of circumstances.

One day some two thousand diggers stood waiting for the issue of claim licences outside the Mining Commissioner's office at Krugersdorp, twenty miles west of Johannesburg. Excitement ruled high though many had been waiting there all night.

The licences were wanted for permission to mine the farm Witfontein, some miles to the west of Krugersdorp. Relays of horses were waiting in the roads to carry the men who had got their licences swiftly to the diggings. Hired gunmen were lurking everywhere to shoot them down. Pugilists were even hired at the goldfield itself to "out" unwelcome peggers.

But the new Witfontein goldfield had already been "sliced," the owner reserving the pick of the claims, while no less than 700 claims or *vergunning* had been presented to the Kruger family, a gift contrary to law: indeed a day or two before the great crowd had assembled, Chief Justice Kotze had delivered judgment as to how many *vergunning* the owner of a gold farm might present to his friends, and had limited that number to sixty. So that of the 700 claims given by the owner of Witfontein to the Krugers, 640 were contrary to law and could not be claimed by them. Naturally they were angry, especially

when they heard that a certain syndicate intended to peg the 640 Kruger claims thus illegally allocated. Incidentally the syndicate's representatives were waiting in the crowd outside the Mining Commissioner's office. A plan was made to frustrate them.

The Mining Commissioner came forth at last and read a proclamation. It announced that in view of the possibility of violence, licences to peg would not be issued and the date of proclamation would be postponed. A great murmur arose from the crowd. For a moment it seemed that a riot would follow—for the diggers had spent £45,000 or more in organizing their pegging.

Nothing happened, however. The angry diggers dispersed.

A certain American prospector, Brown, now took legal advice, found that the postponement was illegal, went out to Witfontein, pegged his claims, and then demanded his claim licences from the Mining Commissioner at Krugersdorp. When issue of these was refused he brought an action against the State for heavy damages. The case came to trial and Chief Justice Kotze delivered judgment in Brown's favour. That judgment was something of a blow to those who felt that the men who held prior right to the ground were the burghers *de facto* and not the newcomers like Brown. It was certainly a blow to President Kruger.

## 5

The President frequently sought to override the Bench. There was the case in which a certain McCorkindale, who had done much to open up the Transvaal in the New Scotland and Lake Chrissie gold areas, was deprived of his rights to certain farms by a Volksraad resolution

which over-rode the High Court. The President had no intention of allowing these juridical defiances to continue. They infuriated him. He accordingly summoned Chief Justice Kotze.

"Judge," said His Honour, "I wish to speak to you privately for a few minutes. . . . The law says a Volksraad resolution is law. What is your view? The law clearly says that all laws and resolutions published by me are of force and cannot be questioned. . . . You must now tell me that you also think this to be so, and, so strengthen the bond of brotherhood that no conflict may arise, otherwise the people will revolt against the court and I will be in a difficult position."

Chief Justice: A court must surely inquire whether a given law is indeed law.

Kruger: How can you say so? . . . If the Court does not respect the Volksraad resolution there will be trouble. . . . I will be obliged to suspend you. (Here the Chief Justice smiled.) Yes, you may laugh. It is a serious matter. A conflict will surely arise which will mean discord and danger to the State.

Chief Justice: I smile because the President speaks of suspension. A conflict between the Volksraad and the Court is certainly serious. I do not think lightly of the consequences and I do not fear them.

President: Set my mind at ease, then, that you judges will respect the resolutions of the Volksraad. Is not a resolution of the Volksraad binding on everyone?

Chief Justice: I can only say that a law properly passed and a resolution taken according to law, may be of force as far as it goes . . . the Judges will act carefully according to the laws of the land. They dare not do anything else.

In the end, however, Chief Justice Kotze was



dismissed from office, and prospector Brown got nothing for his pains. But Justice Kotze emerged from this unfortunate experience with an enviable reputation as a man of honour. Moreover, the grateful residents of the goldfields determined that he should not be made to suffer, and raised £6,000 for him by public subscription.

The incident throws a light on the over-mastering strength of the President's will.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOW FAME CAME TO THE THREE GEORGES

#### I

**K**RUGER was at his wit's end for money—until in 1886 Fate intervened and the poverty-smitten Republic suddenly inherited a vast fortune, and found itself the possessor of goldfields with fathomless beds of rich ore which could not be worked out in a lifetime. And the strangest part of it was, that the instruments of discovery were not the great soldiers, statesmen or financiers, but three poor artisans brought up in poverty and shackled to it all their lives.

The story of the "Three Georges" is the strangest industrial romance of all time. Not only did these poor artisans add vast wealth to the gold stocks of the world but they also focused the Kruger-Rhodes duel on a later and international battlefield. Rhodes indeed, as will presently appear, became a heavy investor in the new goldfields of the Witwatersrand.

This, then, is the story:

Two years after the Anglo-Boer War of '80-81, an old waggon-maker of Worcester and his young assistant trekked to Kimberley. The waggon-maker had nine waggons to sell and several Cape carts: and so, taking three spans of oxen, he entrained the lot to the rail-head at De Aar, inspanned his oxen there, and made them draw his nine waggons (with the Cape carts loaded on them) to Kimberley. He soon sold them in the diamond town. The elder man then returned to Worcester while the younger went up country by

ox-waggon, accompanying his cousin Oosthuizen whom he had met in Kimberley.

The waggon-maker's assistant was of middle height with black beard, small eyes and a high-pitched voice. He and his cousin outspanned on the veld and slept in the waggon: indeed in all that long journey beyond the Modder River they only slept once at a farm house, so sparsely populated was the land.

At length after many days they reached the wild upland called the Witwatersrand—a ridge of blue and gold behind which lay his aunt's thatched cottage. The buxom widow Oosthuizen greeted him warmly as he arrived: her name bespeaking his own mixed parentage, for his father had been a Kentish parson and his mother the sister of the widow Oosthuizen. His name was George Honeyball, later known as "George the First."

He now set up his forge near the homestead. Little enough, Heaven knows, was there for a blacksmith to do in those parts, a circumstance which by no means distressed him, for those were easy-going days. A farmer Bezuidenhout living at Doornfontein six miles to the east of Langlaagte once offered him a job. He walked over the bare lands on which Johannesburg now stands and completed the job in four days.

"What do I owe you?" the farmer asked.

"Ten shillings."

"I haven't two sixpences in the world. You'd better take a sheep in payment."

So Honeyball took a sheep and attaching a rein to it, led it all the lonely way back to Langlaagte where it was slaughtered. And yet these poor farmers, unable to find ten shillings to pay the blacksmith, were, little as they knew it, living on farms undershot to fabulous depths with gold—farms which have since yielded at least one hundred millions sterling.

They eventually sold their rights and became rich men. As for Honeyball, he would have been thoroughly incredulous had he been told of the part he was to play in the subsequent discovery.

## 2

Now less than two years after the setting up of the smithy, two hoboes came tramping through the Free State on their way north: the one a stout little mason, the other a hard-bitten miner. George Harrison and George Walker—George the Second and Third respectively—were bound for the Barberton goldfields, foot-slogging it, as they said, from sunrise to sundown, in dust, heat and thirst and well aware that in all that parched wilderness there were few inns and fewer jobs: which, of course, was why they were headed for the then popular Barberton diggings in the mountains to the north of and beyond the Witwatersrand.

One day they found themselves at Mulders Drift. A cheery inn greeted them there, and a friendly young man.

"Work?" he echoed. "Yes, go and see the Strubens at Wilgespruit. They want a cottage built. My mother, the widow Oosthuizen, farther on at Langlaagte also wants a cottage built. Better see her too!"

## 3

So George the Second and George the Third trudged off to the long blue ridge ahead, broken by ravines and the glint of waterfalls. They entered Wilgespruit gorge, penetrated into it and looked around with interest and awe. It was a wild spot. There were big rocks bared and browned along the hill-tops, buck peeping shyly

forth and giant baboons interrupting their search for scorpions under the stones to stare at the strangers.

On they walked to where a small battery was thudding monotonously at the edge of the running stream. Even now the old walls and foundations are visible and the waters tinkle past as in the long ago. Frivolously they seem to ripple along, lightly disdainful of all the history they made.

"Any jobs going, guvnor?" asked Walker of the tall man—the famous Fred Struben himself—washing gold at the stream. Rough they were and rough they looked, true artisans with packs on their backs and staves in their hands—Walker above middle height with long black whiskers and drooping moustaches, his companion short and stout.

"You can build us a place to sleep in," grunted the gold-washer, eyeing them. "The sooner the better."

They set to work. They collected and shaped a pile of brown flaked stone from the stratified hillside, and began a rough unmortared cottage. Through its crevices the winds howled o' nights like a thousand devils. Before long Harrison left the work to Walker and made his way to the white homestead of the widow Oosthuizen six miles to the south east; for he had wanted that job himself.

There George the Second met George the First, and George the Third sometimes came over from Wilgespruit Gorge. In the little tavern at Langlaagte—the only inn for miles—the three Georges met and drank and talked.

Meanwhile Struben and his friend Godfray Lys from Natal had drilled deeply into the rocks above Wilgespruit Ravine. They had made a queer little corridor through which they approached the gold-bearing reef, blasting it and taking it down to the battery near the stream. Sometimes another prospector, Bantjes, working on another reef a mile or more to the south,

would come over the rise to pass the time of day. But somehow the discovery of the payable part of the mighty gold reef which Struben knew must lie quite close at hand, continued to evade them. Struben had been the great pioneer and instrument of proof. Day and night he had toiled on dauntlessly, his brother Harry Struben riding over from Pretoria to help him with advice and money. His capital had gone, his faith alone remained. But what a faith it was! Without it the course of world history might have been changed, and the world map different.

## 4

Months elapsed. The two cottages—Struben's in Wilgespruit Gorge and the widow Oosthuizen's in Langlaagte—had been completed and the three chums foregathered in the tavern for the last time. But Walker now had a strange story to tell, so strange, so startling, that as he stood under the dim lamp in the bar, his voice shook with excitement.

"Lads," he began, "Ah've found the reef, a big reef . . . running for miles. . . . Ah nearly fell over it yonder there . . . in the grass . . . !"

Then he told them how he had been walking about the veld making up his mind to trek on to Barberton for work, when he suddenly tripped over something in the long grass. Parting the blades he saw the outcrop of a reef of gold. He traced it east and west, broke a bit off and took it to a pool near the widow's cottage and panned it there. The rock made a wonderful showing of gold. Well he knew the look of a reef, for had he not spent the greater part of his life at the game?

The cronies grew excited. Walker declared he would get an option from the widow and would go off at once to Potchefstroom to raise capital. He was confiding that day, garrulous. He took

Honeyball and Harrison to the spot where he had stumbled over the reef. Honeyball went out alone a little later and quietly traced the reef down into a hollow and across his aunt's farm.

Walker had indeed "struck" it rich. He had found the richest gold region in the world. The value of its unmined content is perhaps three-thousand millions sterling. His discovery made big history. That it brought another sensational northward rush of fortune-seekers from Kimberley into the little Republic in 1886 was a small matter compared with what followed. As we have said, it brought Kruger and Rhodes into yet sharper conflict. And it led up to the Jameson Raid and the Anglo-Boer War. These in turn aroused ill-feeling between King Edward and the Kaiser, their quarrel urging them to form the international coalitions which faced each other during the Great War. But the imposing story does not end even there. There is still the effect on the nations of the steady and vast increase in the world's gold output which has since followed George Walker's discovery. It has been a great factor in determining world gold prices; and it has certainly swayed the international gold crisis which shook civilization when England and America abandoned gold in 1931 and 1933.

## 5

The widow offered Walker his options. He tramped away to try and raise his capital. Honeyball meanwhile had a quiet talk with the widow.

"Your farm's full of gold," he confided excitedly, "you mustn't sell it unless you get a big price for it."

Once more he went back to the outcrop, knocked a bit off, and dashed over to Wilgespruit Gorge. He showed the ore sample to Godfray Lys at Struben's mill.

"If I show you where this came from," he said, "what's it worth, a fiver?"

"I can't give you the fiver now," Lys admitted after examining it, "but you shall have it later."

Honeyball agreed to reveal the spot. So Lys shut down the mill—Struben was asleep in the new cottage—and he and Honeyball galloped across to Langlaagte where Lys examined the ground and was "astonished at the richness of the discovery."

Walker meanwhile reached Potchefstroom, where they laughed at his story. So after walking vainly about the countryside he returned without his capital, to find his secret out and the wealthy J. B. Robinson from Kimberley installed on the farm as a guest and offering the widow big sums.

"You have given the show away, Honeyball," reproached Walker bitterly.

"No, no," protested Honeyball in his high-pitched voice: "It was no secret—you never made a secret of it!"

Nor indeed had he.<sup>1</sup>

President Kruger and his anxious Raad now saw Rhodes and other rich men from Kimberley and Natal fastening on the mighty goldfield in their country, the existence of which had long been prophesied by Fred and Harry Struben. And while he wondered if the find was really so rich and how far it would relieve the poverty of the Republic, he saw more clearly than any of his compatriots that the old people, the old language, the old ideals—beloved because born out of suffering—might, for awhile at least, be swept away.

And he determined to fight for them.

<sup>1</sup> Poor George Walker, who had literally "struck" the mightiest gold reef on earth, continued to be an obscure miner; Honeyball went north to live in a mud dwelling at Pienaar's River, returning to a humble cottage on the Rand in his later years, a pathetic white-bearded old man; and Harrison vanished and is believed to have died at Barberton.

And that is the strange story of the Three Georges.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CLASH ON THE RAND GOLDFIELDS

#### I

**D**IGGERS came flocking in along the line of the outcrops. Julius Jeppe crossed the ridge overlooking the Rand one night in 1886 and gazed at the camp fires below. The haze dimmed the twinkling lights, the cold air bore upwards faint snatches of song. The calm scene, the genesis of an epoch, bespoke the spirit of nocturne.

Jeppe made his way to his brother's tent to the west. In after years he often spoke of the happy-valley appearance of the Rand then, and how it gradually filled up with soldiers of fortune who concentrated about the three first camps, each two miles apart—Ferreira's camp in the middle, from which the city of Johannesburg sprang, and the Natal and Langlaagte camps to the east and west of it respectively.

How swiftly the mines were started! What queer names they had—the Blue Sky, the Iron Crown, the Sultan, the Golden Slipper, the Revolver Consolidated! Obviously the pioneers named their mines after some fugitive circumstance, as when claim-jumpers inspired the name "Jumpers," and when Godfray Lys named the Crown Reef Mine (the progenitor of the Crown Mines, the largest gold property in the world) from the circumstance that it lay in the crown of a kopje. The queer name "The Chimes" was a joke on the part of the asbestos magnates, the Bells, who sponsored the original syndicate; while the Geduld was christened by President Kruger

in a mood of homily, the name meaning "patience." Interesting is it also to recall the fact that the name of the famous mine, Luipaards Vlei, derived from the wide watery valley frequented by leopards in the early 'eighties.

Everything, however, had to be brought up to the new goldfields by waggon—food, mining machinery, and corrugated iron for houses. And so the dust of the ever-moving waggon and coach flamed over the northward highways. The carcasses of oxen and mules, too, dotted the roads. Birds of prey, heavy, slow-winged, flapped lazily about.

Cecil Rhodes came up many times. Once his coach broke down in a thunderstorm, and he was compelled to utilize an ox-waggon and to travel on it for 36 hours soaked to the skin.

## 2

Many who reached the Rand in those first years grew famous—Dr. H. Sauer, Henry Nourse (who had prospected for years in the vicinity of the Rand), C. D. Rudd, Julius Wernher, Alfred Beit, Abe Bailey, Lionel Phillips, Barney Barnato, Solly and Wolf Joel, Sammy Marks, and at their heels the bad men, Deeming, that arch murderer, subsequently executed in Australia, McKoen the bank robber, and a host of illicit diamond buyers who sensed a profitable field in gold where before they had dealt in diamonds.

The few women who came up had to suffer hardship on the journey and after. Old Mrs. Frames still remembers her coach being driven over the flooded Sand River. From the banks in the teeming rain she watched the men hold on to whichever side tipped up in the water, which rose well over the inside seats. The coach reached the opposite bank, and the men then waded back and carried the women across.

An overhead cable had been stretched above the Vet River between sturdy trees on either bank; and hanging from it was a small cage on runners. In flood times passengers got across by working a wheel.

The clergy came in with the coaches. They were active from the very first. The Rev. James Darragh, of the Church of England, held one of the first services at Heights Hotel, then in course of construction. Seats were made by placing boards across piles of brick. The audience was exceedingly mixed. A seventy-year-old ex-actress, named Ebdon, was present, one who had made an earlier reputation on the Kimberley fields. She brought with her her dog, a fox-terrier named Moses.

It is recalled that the Rev. gentleman unfortunately chose as his text Exodus xxxiii, 5: "For the Lord had said unto Moses, say unto the children of Israel ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment and consume thee."

In the course of an eloquent oration largely concerned, of course, with the doings of Moses, Darragh had occasion to mention the name of the Jewish prophet many times. The fox-terrier hearing his own name thus thundered out, went running up to the parson and stood barking and wagging his tail. The hilarity of the congregation was followed by the collapse of several seats with their brick supports.

### 3

Rhodes, anxious to secure big gold-mine holdings, was nevertheless dissuaded at first by his experts, who had no faith in the fields. Yet his own instincts urged him to buy. He acquired interests which, together with those of Rudd,

enabled him to found the Goldfields of South Africa, the house which subsequently became the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa. This established him as firmly on the Rand, as the Chartered Company and De Beers had established him in Rhodesia and Kimberley.

Kruger watched the vast influx closely. No doubt he was the more concerned to find that Rhodes, who had beaten him once over the Bechuanaland corridor, was a powerful figure on the Rand. Rhodes was soon to clash with him again. Rhodes indeed formed one of a deputation which interviewed him with regard to the Republican Administration of the new goldfields. At this meeting—momentous in its conflict between two men of such outstanding force of character—they fought on the very principles which afterwards led to the second Anglo-Dutch war, namely, the rights of the diggers or Uitlanders.

They met at Kruger's house. The President himself received them—Rhodes, J. B. Robinson and four other delegates in Pretoria. He met them at his front door and led them to the extreme end of his sitting-room, where he settled himself in a large easy chair. He glanced at Rhodes and the others and said in his thick guttural voice: "Sit down!"

The President filled his pipe, sat back, and began smoking. Nobody spoke for awhile. Rhodes regarded Kruger curiously as the older man pushed back the brim of his black beaver hat and stared at the wall. Rhodes was introduced by Robinson as a member of the Cape Ministry.

"Yes, yes," said Kruger impatiently, "let him speak!"

Rhodes then strove to impress the President with the importance of the new fields and the need of adequate laws to ensure their prosperity. He

spoke boldly, without making concessions to the inflexible Presidential character.

Kruger pointed the stem of his pipe at his rival as he sat down. "Tell him," he said to the interpreter, "I am here to protect my burghers as well as the Rand people. I know what I have to do and I will do it!"

## 4

Rhodes resolved to press on with his railways. Though industry does not necessarily follow railways: railways usually follow industry. So that railways simply had to go to Kimberley and the goldfields. The railway from Capetown to Kimberley (647 miles) was opened in 1885, and that to the Rand goldfields via the Cape and Kimberley (956 miles) was opened in 1892. Kruger always called this Rhodes's line; and he determined to smash it at all costs with a shorter line from Delagoa Bay on the East African coast. He felt that the shorter distance would mean cheaper rates. All other things being equal, of course, it would have been so; but the "Rhodes line" was run so much more efficiently, and the capital expenditure per mile had been so much less, that these factors more than overcame any advantages conferred by the shorter distance. So, to the President's surprise, most of the traffic came to the goldfields over Rhodes's route. Kruger retaliated by making the rates enormously heavy for that section of Rhodes's line which traversed his Republican territory—from the southern border to the Rand. Moreover, he delayed traffic by blocking the line with empty trucks. Rhodes retorted by organizing a fast waggon service to the Rand from the border. In this way he still retained the bulk of the traffic. Kruger closed the drifts. His edict stopped the

waggon traffic. Rhodes appealed to the Imperial Government. The latter promptly declared the closure of the drifts to be a contravention of the London Convention, and announced that failure to remove the edict would be regarded as an act of war.

Kruger climbed down. And thus the second round in the long fight went to Rhodes.

## 5

Kruger quickly implemented his plans for giving the burghers preference in all benefits accruing from the mining of Rand gold. And so the following Uitlander grievances presently became acute:

1. That the mining industry had to pay excessively for its dynamite; had to buy it from a single privileged firm which paid a royalty to certain members of the Boer Government.

2. That 75,000 burghers with the vote were paying one-tenth of the taxes, while;

3. 175,000 Uitlanders without the vote were paying nine-tenths of the taxes.

4. That in return for all the wealth earned for the Boer Republic by British and foreign capital sunk in Johannesburg and the goldfields, Kruger did little or nothing to provide adequate policing or educational facilities. Furthermore that while burgher children were allotted educational subsidies at the rate of £9 per head, Uitlander children were subsidized at the rate of two shillings per head.

5. Johannesburg and the mines were heavily penalized by excessive railway rates which increased the price of goods and the cost of living and created an additional burden for the goldfields, and

6. That the Boer Government had granted a liquor monopoly, so that liquor dealers were allowed to sell alcohol to native labourers and even to men about to go down the mine shafts, a concession that had caused serious accidents.

The Uitlanders established a reform committee which met in constant session in the Board Room of the Consolidated Buildings, Johannesburg.

There, amid an ever-rising haze of cigar smoke, the reformers hatched their plot. This was:

(a) To win reforms at all costs for the Uitlanders:

(b) Failing this—to invite Dr. Jameson over the border with his Rhodesians to support an armed rising; and, in certain eventualities:

(c) To capture President Kruger and to seize the town.

To this end large quantities of arms in packing-cases and in oil drums were brought into the gold-fields. Ominous rumours reached the President. He sent out his spies on all sides.

## CHAPTER XV

### RHODES CROSSES THE LIMPOPO

#### I

LET us go back a little. From the early 'eighties Rhodes had been thinking constantly of the north, indeed his enthusiasm for Imperial expansion beyond the Limpopo, the northern boundary of the Transvaal, coloured all his talk, and even dominated that of his household at Kimberley.

Rhodes and Doctor Jameson lived and dined together and were on intimate terms, as the following incident suggests. Rhodes had an elderly hostess to receive his guests. One night the conversation turned at dinner on the Zimbabwe temple and the acropolis, those great ruins in Southern Rhodesia which have excited world-wide speculation. Hall, Bent, Dart and Frobenius on the one side have declared for a remote, even a Phœnician origin; while MacIvor, Caton Thompson and others have favoured a mediæval Bantu origin. From talk of the temple Rhodes discussed animatedly the worship which prevailed there, the phallic worship which had undoubtedly been customary among the Zimbabwe priests.

"What is phallic worship, Mr. Rhodes?" asked the hostess at last in a break in the conversation.

Rhodes instantly took out his watch, glanced at it, and said as he stood up, "I'm sorry, I've an appointment with Dr. Rutherford Harris. Jameson will explain." And he left the table.

Dr. Jim used to say afterwards that of the many difficult tasks set him on behalf of Rhodes, that was quite the most onerous.



## 2

But the cry was—to the north! It dominated African policies in the late 'eighties. The European powers suddenly became Empire conscious and began to scramble for the lands beyond the Limpopo. Portugal claimed them: Germany wanted them: Belgium sought them and so did Rhodes. His schemes, as we have seen, envisaged a continuous line of British territory from the Cape to Egypt. The methods by which he thrust aside so many rivals and acquired so much of this territory were often Napoleonic. Which means that they were often unscrupulous. His envoys, Jameson, Rudd, Rochfort, Maguire and F. R. Thompson agreed to take over from Lobengula, King of Matabeleland, Western Rhodesia, control of all the minerals and metals in Matabeleland *in return for £100 a month, 1,000 Martini Henry rifles and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition!*

These concessions—actually the result of Jameson's uncanny influence over the Matabele King—led eventually to the grant of a charter to the British South African company, which then set out on its career with a share capital of £1,000,000. The regions over which the charter proclaimed jurisdiction were vaguely described as lying immediately north of British Bechuanaland, north and west of the South African Republic (Transvaal) and west of the Portuguese dominions on the East Coast. The charter reinforced Lobengula's original concessions, and accorded the "Chartered Company," as it came to be known, what were virtually sovereign rights.

Rhodes quickly saw, however, there was one grave drawback to the successful working of his new territories. They had no port. So that it was certainly a coincidence that entering a railway compartment in the Cape one day in 1889 he

found himself opposite Major Vinnie Erskine, a traveller who had explored the golden regions of the mythical Monomotapa (Northern Rhodesia) and had a considerable knowledge of Mozambique which intervenes between Rhodesia and the sea. He told Rhodes he was about to conclude an agreement with King Carlos and the Portuguese Cortes to acquire extensive concessions in Mozambique from Delagoa Bay northwards, concessions which included everything, except perhaps the Sovereign title to the territory.

Rhodes, who had not then got his Charter through and who continued to be troubled by the thought that even if he got it there would be no port for the territory, instantly saw his chance. Here, he felt, would be his port—Beira—north of Lourenço Marques.

"Come in with me, Erskine," he said, "and make a single job of it—my new territories and Mozambique."

"My dear fellow," replied Erskine, "I can't: it's too big a thing!"

And thus was Rhodes turned down!

Erskine, agitated with thoughts of vast fortune, continued to rush backwards and forwards to Portugal. Then came the fateful day when Captain Pinto da Sousa fired at and wounded certain natives on the British side of the River Shire, Northern Rhodesia, and Britain demanded an apology. As this was not forthcoming England sent a gunboat to the mouth of the Tagus and the two nations were on the brink of war.

T. A. R. Purchas, one of the Johannesburg members of the Erskine Syndicate, was hurrying back from a vacation trip in East Griqualand in response to a wire from Edwin Dunning (the secretary), "Return instantly. I congratulate you on being a millionaire!" When he picked up a copy of *The Natal Witness* in a barber's shop

at Maritzburg, he read the fateful news of the crisis.

War was certainly averted, but there was an upheaval in Portugal, the Cortes was turned out, and Vinnie Erskine left Lisbon with his concessions unsigned by the King. Nor were they ever signed. Thus Rhodesia lost the port that with a little more luck might have been hers.

In 1891, however, on Rhodes's initiative, a treaty was concluded between Britain and Portugal providing for a railway from Beira to Salisbury.

### 3

Kruger from his Presidential chair in Pretoria watched in ominous silence the speedy northward thrust of the Colossus. Rhodes obtained permission to extend the territories of the Chartered Company to the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, including certain British settlements already made in Nyasaland. He urged the British Government to retain Uganda in the north and even undertook to pay the cost of linking that country with British possessions in Southern Africa.

Dr. Jameson—voracious reader of the exploits of Clive—had gone north with the Rhodesia pioneer column, and became Rhodes's chief lieutenant, sharing his ambitions and playing a big part in bringing them to fruition. He went to Gazaland, forced a big concession out of King Gungunyama (a concession disallowed by the Imperial Government), and did all he could to advance British interests generally. He even opposed a Boer trek—known as the Banyailand Trek—in which two parties of Transvaal Boers under Colonel Ferreira went to the banks of the Limpopo with the intention of settling in Rhodesia. Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner at Cape-

town, protested strongly to President Kruger against this trek, informing him that any attempt to invade the Chartered Company's territories would be regarded as an act of hostility to the British Crown. Kruger forbade the trekkers to proceed farther. Jameson with a British South Africa Company's force met the trekkers on the border, that is to say, on the banks of the Limpopo, and arrested Ferreira for a few days, whereon the Expedition dispersed.

But from the first the pioneers had a difficult time. Rhodes and his lieutenants travelled anxiously about the country affording help and encouragement where they could. During the difficult days of 1892 there lived a storekeeper "Fatty" Reece at Chibi in Victoria District. He was a curious fellow with a gift for sleep: indeed he could sleep to order at any hour of the day or night. Behind the counter of his wattle-and-daub store he had placed a stretcher on which he would sleep between the visits of customers. So bad were things at the time that this good-hearted character was constantly helping down-and-outs on the way south out of the country. Trade was fast disappearing.

One day he awoke to find two big, rough-looking men in his store. They were looking into the roof. On the rafters hung sundry wide Mexican straws, of great protection against the remorseless Rhodesian sun.

One of the two grimy men said, "How much those, boy?"

"Well," said the storekeeper yawning, "I usually charge twelve and six each, but I s'pose you —— are down and out, so you can have 'em for ten bob apiece."

"Right," said one, "ten bob it is."

As they were trying them on, the stout storekeeper said:

"What are you leavin' the country for? You're making a mistake. Cecil John'll pull it right!"

The desperadoes looked gloomily incredulous, and as one of them seemed to be constantly "sizing up" the stock, it was to the storekeeper's great relief that they at last went out. He made sure of them to the door where he saw a fine conveyance, a number of mules and Tony the coloured cook who went everywhere with Rhodes.

The storekeeper was stricken with dismay: for he now saw that his two visitors were Cecil John Rhodes and Sir Charles Metcalfe.

They drove off wearing their new hats. Six to eight months afterwards Captain Jack Brabant, the Native Commissioner at Fort Victoria, received a scrawl from Rhodes instructing him to use his influence to see that Reece the stout storekeeper of Chibi got the native trade.

In this way was Rhodes loyal to his friends. His heart warmed to an honest tribute: but he despised the timeservers.

## 4

Pioneering and hardship are, of course, synonymous. In Rhodesia, there were droughts, floods, locusts, wild beasts, embittered native tribesmen and fever. A man might strike it lucky, or might not. But in face of pressing difficulty there was always the temptation to drink.

Among the pioneers were two brothers, ex bank-official and civil servant respectively, who threw up their jobs down south and went prospecting. Their history sheds some light on the life in Rhodesia at the time.

They settled on a hilltop at a place south of Bulawayo. The Rhodesian sun is hot. Neither waited for it to go down. They drank every day and every night so that eventually one of them

died. His brother merely ordered another case of whisky and issued invitations to the obsequies. Only two turned up, to find their host hammering a coffin together from the wood of his countless whisky cases. Into this the body of "Big Bill" was placed at last and nailed down.

The mourners fortified themselves well. When about to carry the coffin down the hill to the proposed place of burial, the surviving brother suddenly remembered he had forgotten to dig a grave; and all sat down to consider the matter. An argument ensued. One of the party was of the opinion that the dead man was not the paragon his brother declared him to be.

"Let Big Bill bury himself," he cried and went back to the hut leaving the coffin where it was. Next morning they were all sober. Waking early they went outside to complete the burial. They stood dumbfounded. The coffin had gone. In its place were some scattered human bones, and splintered fragments of wood. Hyenas had devoured the corpse in the night!

Horried, the younger brother set to work to bury the gruesome relics. He smashed the bottles of whisky left in his hut, forswore drink from that moment, and for the rest of his days kept his word. The lessons of life were learned in a hard school then. But they were learned, for there was sterling stuff in many of the pioneers, men who fought difficulties undreamt of in the sheltered ways of the cities. Through battle, murder and sudden death the sterner sort stood by the new territories. All honour to them! They made the Rhodesias.

5

In those rough-and-ready days, Jameson, stimulated by the Homeric thinking of Rhodes, continued to grow in spirit. He officiated brilli-

antly as magistrate, medico, diplomat and soldier. In July, 1893, the restless regiments of Lobengula set out to attack the Mashonas, and in doing so chased their victims into the streets of Victoria (a new township of Mashonaland), a violation of order that had to be punished. The story is well known that when Jameson told Rhodes that he was minded to march against the formidable Matabele, Rhodes wired back: "Read Luke fourteen, thirty-one!"

Jameson called for a Bible and read: "Or what king going to make war against another king sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?"

"All right," wired back Jameson. "I have read Luke fourteen."

He marched then with 1,600 men against 4,000 to 5,000 Matabele and defeated them. Subsequently he smashed a larger Matabele army of 7,000 and burned the kraals of the King at Bulawayo. Lobengula, full of gout, weary and overborne, fled towards the Zambesi and died in 1894.

The last years of Lobengula were black with tragedy. It was Greek in its unrelieved persistence. The kraals of his "Great Place" had been besieged by obsequious concession seekers (including the representatives of the German financier Lippert) who plied the old savage with drink. This had led the Matabele indunas to resent a situation which they well knew meant the ultimate loss of their country. At loggerheads with his own councillors, Lobengula was finally driven into exile and death by Jameson whom he admired above all men: and when he endeavoured to stay the fighting by sending envoys to the Forbes patrol with £1,000 in gold dust, two troopers stole the money and said nothing about it. Incidentally when the

matter was discovered these men were very properly sentenced to imprisonment for fourteen years. What, however, also grieved the old monarch intensely was the sudden disappearance of his great lion's claw necklace, a gift from Queen Victoria.

This necklace came at the last into the possession of one of Rhodes's faithful followers, Colonel Colenbrander, who met his death by drowning in the Vaal River when directing the making of the film "Symbol of Sacrifice." His horse trod in a hole in the river and fell, and Colenbrander, who was wearing enormous top-boots which had filled with water, was dragged under.

The great necklace of lions' claws mounted in gold was one of the most treasured items in Lobengula's hoard. Every claw had a gold base and each had been carefully graduated. In the middle a five-pound gold piece dangled like a pendant, the general effect on the neck and breast of the barbaric king being most imposing.

When it disappeared, the witch doctors were summoned, there were smellings out, and it is said even torture and death for those who had come under suspicion. But the necklace was not found. Colonel Colenbrander who, as stated, had somehow come into possession of it, and no doubt quite honestly, kept it in a safe in Johannesburg. It was subsequently taken to London. Attempts to interest Christie's in it failed, that firm requiring proofs of ownership before handling it, and hinting to the individual, who was certainly an innocent intermediary in the deal, that the matter did not look well to them. The necklace was thereupon brought back to South Africa and, according to report, was sold in Capetown for £250. Its present whereabouts are unknown.



## 6

Jameson's military successes, warmly applauded in London, filled the versatile doctor with a desire to distinguish himself again as a soldier; and so it befell that when he heard one day of the possibility of a rising of Uitlanders on the Rand goldfields—Uitlanders determined to resist the oppressions of the Kruger government—he foresaw the chance of another military expedition and listened with outward calm and inward eagerness to the stories told by Hays Hammond, the famous mining engineer, just up from the Rand with news of the political crisis fast developing on the goldfields.

Rhodes was an even more interested listener. Camped out at night under the Rhodesian moon, Rhodes, Jameson and Hays Hammond talked the matter out, and Rhodes felt more than ever as he heard the details of Uitlander grievances, and the scandal of taxation, education, and the dynamite monopoly; heard, too, of the way in which his own financial interests on the Rand were being jeopardized, that he would have to fight Paul Kruger, and that the fight would be to the death.

It was in these circumstances that he, as the figure whose influence as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and Chairman of the Chartered Company and De Beers made the Jameson Raid possible, stood behind the raid.

He lent his influence to it and was party to it.

## CHAPTER XVI

### HOW RHODES PLAYED INTO KRUGER'S HANDS

#### I

JAMESON moved down with a mounted force to Pitsani, near Mafeking, towards the end of 1895. Possessing a letter of invitation signed by Charles Leonard, Lionel Phillips, Frank Rhodes, Hays Hammond and George Farrar—the leading reformers on the Rand goldfields—he had determined to make a raid into the Transvaal. The letter was to cover him in the event of future trouble. It recapitulated the grievances of the Uitlanders and concluded:

“It is under these circumstances that we feel constrained to ask you to come to our aid should a disturbance arise here. The circumstances are so extreme that we cannot but believe that you and the men under you will not fail to come to the rescue of people who will be so situated. We guarantee any expense that may be reasonably incurred by you in helping us, and ask you to believe that nothing but the sternest necessity has prompted this appeal. . . .”

The letter was handed to Jameson in Johannesburg towards the end of November, 1895.

Hays Hammond has left it on record that Jameson shook hands with him in the presence of Rhodes, and solemnly swore not to cross the Transvaal border with his Rhodesians and the Bechuanaland Police unless and until he had received from Hays Hammond as representing both Rhodes and Johannesburg, a further special request to come in.

“Of all the scenes of the period,” Hays

Hammond has declared, "none is more clearly imprinted on my memory than that of Jameson shaking hands with me in the presence of Rhodes as a solemn pledge that he would not cross the border until I gave the signal."

Jameson, however, as will presently appear, crossed the border before the signal was given.

## 2

The situation in disturbed Johannesburg grew more intense. Rifles continued to arrive in Johannesburg in coal trucks (completely covered with coal) and in great oil-drums with deceptive taps dripping oil, and in cases labelled "mining machinery." They were unloaded and placed in mine managers' houses, in back gardens and down mine shafts, subsequently being redistributed to various depots.

Thus, while Jameson's men were encamped on the western border of the Republic, the Reformers were continuing their interminable debates in a veritable haze of cigar smoke, in the board-room of the Rhodes-Rudd House, the Consolidated Buildings, Johannesburg. They felt secure in the belief that Jameson would never cross the border until given the word.

However, Jameson thought otherwise. For three weeks the troops, who believed that the concentration was preliminary to a march against Chief Mochudi in the Southern Protectorate, had been on the veld practising advanced and rear-guards, and screens and patrols. The fact had not escaped the notice of President Kruger. And Jameson well knew that Kruger knew, and that more delay on the border would give him time to mobilize effectively to stop him. Either he must go in at once, therefore, or not at all. He decided to go in.

## 3

Captain A. H. J. Hore, of the Bechuanaland Border Police, has related how he cut the telegraph wires for the raiders:

"Our instructions were," he writes, "to get up about midnight when all was quiet and the village asleep, and to ride some few miles out until we struck the telegraph wire which we were to cut in at least three places. We were then to return through the village and ride along a road until we came to what was ostensibly a new trading store, but which was in reality the first of a line of stores built along our route to supply the column.

"Unfortunately there was a brilliant moon that night. It added considerably to the risk of being spotted . . . but we managed to reach the store without mishap.

"The man in charge of the store handed each of us a small axe and pointed out the direction in which we were to ride to the telegraph line. We found this line supported on branches of trees and we cut at least 150 yards of it and smashed the insulators with our axes. We then retraced our steps to the store, arriving there at about 4 a.m. and having ridden 35 miles since leaving Mafeking. After baiting our ponies and chatting with the storekeeper, we lay down on the veld, hoping to get forty winks.

"We had barely closed our eyes when we heard a trumpet, and realized that the columns, both B.B.P. and Pitsani troops, had arrived."

Jameson had crossed the border and had begun his fateful march on the Rand!

## 4

On New Year's Day, 1896, his little column drew near the goldfields. The tiny oblong of

tired men saw the faint wisps of smoke which marked the line of the gold mines.

But opposition was stiffening. Not only were they being followed, but the Boers—straggling squads of horsemen—were now in front and on their flanks. As the raiders neared Randfontein they were forced to take the only opening to their right, and deviating to the south were met by a guide. This man—described as an elderly individual who spoke good English—guided them into an extensive basin of ground, then towards certain dongas and kopjes. The Boer commando on the right streamed along meanwhile keeping pace with the column. Now and then one of the horsemen would fire casually at the raiders, until when passing a farmhouse and going down a rocky slope they were met by unexpectedly heavy fire—rifle and artillery fire—from a high kopje in front. It swept the slope they were on. Jameson and his staff had the cover of the farmhouse wall, the men had none; and it seems amazing that more were not hit. The troopers bravely returned the fire.

It so happened that certain occupants of a kafir hut at Doornkop, one of them a native servant on a visit from Krugersdorp, with a new white apron, were peeping out in terror and excitement at the scene.

A trooper dashed in, tore the apron off the woman and sped out with it. Shortly afterwards it was hoisted on the roof of Brink's farm in token of surrender.

"Who authorized that?" demanded Jameson.

But the signal had been made, the surrender proffered and accepted; the raiders were in a death-trap. Had it not been for the fact that, as an old Boer explained afterwards, many of his young men were so nervous when shooting from behind Doornkop that they could not aim, the casualties would have been far heavier.

## 5

So the force surrendered. Several burgher horsemen, one of whom was Commandant Cronje (already mentioned in connexion with the siege of Potchefstroom in 1881 and to be discussed later as the central figure at the battle of Paardeberg) came galloping across to Jameson.

"Are you willing to lay down your flag and your arms?" Cronje asked.

"I have no flag," replied Jameson. "I am willing to lay down my arms!"<sup>1</sup>

Rhodes at the Cape was utterly overwhelmed when he heard the news. "Poor old Jameson!" he groaned. "Friends for twenty years and now he goes in and ruins me!"

How Dr. Jameson, Sir John Willoughby, Major Coventry and the two Whites were tried on July 20, 1896, in London before Lord Russell of Killowen, and were sentenced (Jameson to fifteen months; Willoughby to ten months; "Bobby" White to seven months; and the others to five months each without hard labour); how on April 24, 1896, in Pretoria, Mr. Justice Gregorowski sentenced to death the four leading reformers, Colonel Frank Rhodes (brother of Cecil), Hays Hammond, George Farrar and Lionel Phillips,

<sup>1</sup> As the raiders were on their way into Krugersdorp as prisoners, an old white-bearded Boer on a little scraggy pony was riding as escort to a young officer on a splendid 16-hand chestnut. He spoke fairly good English and said. "We don't blame you, you are a lot of brave boys and were only obeying your orders, but your leaders and the people in Johannesburg ought to be shot." He produced some bread and meat and shared all he had with the officer, who added, "I was wearing my Sam Browne belt, but my revolver had of course been handed over. The old gentleman, pointing to the holster, said, 'Take that belt off.' Realizing that I was a prisoner, I took off my belt and handed it to him saying, 'I shall be glad if you will let me keep this belt, sir, as it is an old friend.' He asked 'What is your name?' I told him, and he took a pencil out of his pocket, wrote something on the inside of the shoulder strap, and handed the belt back to me. 'Sir,' he said, 'I make you a present of this; keep it; and if you ever come to Pretoria, you will visit me, my wife, and daughters.'"

how the sentences were quashed on payment of £25,000 each; and how other reformers were sentenced to pay fines of £2,000 each—all this is sufficiently well known to warrant mere passing reference.

The raid was the outcome of the Kruger-Rhodes quarrel, and from every point of view it gave Kruger a sudden and overwhelming advantage over his great rival. It was a gross political blunder. Its international repercussions were even more serious than those observable within South Africa. For it inspired the Kaiser Wilhelm to write his notorious telegram of sympathy with Kruger, prompted him also to antagonize the Czar against Britain, and so exacerbated the relations between the British and German royal families, as to pave the way for the formation of those mighty alliances which faced up to each other during the Great War.

## CHAPTER XVII

### RHODES AS PEACEMAKER

#### I

THE storm aroused by the raid almost overwhelmed Rhodes. He resigned the premiership of the Cape Colony in January, 1896. He also tendered his resignation from the Chairmanship of the Chartered Company, a resignation accepted with the reservation that it must not take effect until July, 1896.

"I'm going to face the music," he told his friends as he sailed for London. He arrived there on February 5, after a voyage delayed by several mishaps on the steamer, but only stayed four days, during which he had interviews at the Foreign Office with Joseph Chamberlain who thought that even if his Charter were not revoked it might now have to be administered under the eye of a Crown Commissioner. Rhodes also attended a meeting of the Chartered Company which he found well disposed towards him. Then he left for South Africa.

Various interpretations were placed on his sudden departure, one of which was the troubled state of Rhodesia; though many believed that he had withdrawn by the advice of Mr. Chamberlain, who, with his fingers tightly on the pulse of public affairs, saw that matters were still critical.

But while Rhodes was yet on the water the prospect grew blacker. A trader whose oxen had rinderpest carried that dread disease into Matabeleland and Mashonaland, everywhere wiping out



the native cattle. Then, the Matabele hearing that Dr. Jameson had been defeated, thought that the time had come to drive out the white men—those settlers who, they said, had taken their land from them and brought the cattle sickness into it.

Rhodes meanwhile had sailed up the East African coast, landed at Beira, and had gone towards Salisbury, ill with malarial fever. He was appalled by the evidence of cattle sickness that everywhere met his gaze, the roads and hills littered with pestilential carcasses. And as if all that were not enough, there came a culminating horror which shocked Africa and the wider world.

## 2

One night towards the end of March, 1896, when the moon was at full, the witch doctors ordered the Matabele to rise and murder the white men. That night as on some tragical eve of Bartholomew, the black men massacred the settlers who, trusting in Rhodes and sharing his faith in Rhodesia, had settled throughout the country.

There were hideous scenes. At midnight on March 24, the Matabele swooped down on the homestead of the Cunninghams near the Inseza River. Using battle-axes, spears and knob-kerries they killed the entire family, then burned the place down. In one room the charred remains of a mother and three children were found: and in others the remains of four adults. A little girl of seven who had escaped unhurt to the banks of the Inseza, was subsequently caught by Matabele women who had come to reap and take away the grain of the dead family. One of them pounded the child's head to pulp with a stone. At the burial of the Cunninghams, there were tears in the eyes of the rough irregulars who stood

around. The rising was followed by the formation of laagers in the settlements, then by a concentration of European columns on the Pongola, a tributary of the Shangani River. Rhodes himself travelled down to the rendezvous with the Salisbury column. The sorrows of the settlers saddened him, though fortunately even in the course of that tragical march there were lighter moments. At Pongola it was found that there were three colonels, namely Colonel Robert Beale with the Salisbury column, and Colonels Jack Spreckley and William Napier with the Bulawayo column. A dispute as to seniority became acute and it was decided to refer the matter for settlement to Rhodes.

"There's some slight mistake here, gentlemen," said Rhodes who had been apprised of what was happening. "There are four Colonels in this camp, of whom I, Cecil John Rhodes, am the senior. I delegate my seniority to Colonel Napier and he will take charge!"

Now Rhodes knew that the men of the columns and the survivors of the massacre were grieved and full of bitterness, for they had seen nameless things done: he accordingly gave an order which he alone with his utter informality and ability to dive down into the heart of a situation, could give. As the troops from the south were arriving at tactical centres he knew there was no immediate danger to the colonial columns and he gave the order, "free drinks." Supplies of Dop brandy had been brought down with the Salisbury waggons and these were unloaded forthwith. A brief jamboree began, at the end of which Rhodes issued a peremptory order for a cessation of the drinking. One man failed to obey the order, and was arrested and court-martialled.

Rhodes himself sat on the court-martial. The prosecuting officer was an Indian army captain

who had been hunting in Rhodesia at the time of the outbreak of the rebellion. The Captain described the prisoner as a "waster." At this Rhodes intervened. Addressing the over-zealous prosecutor, he said:

"Pardon me, but what did you say your name was?"

"Captain ——, sir."

"Well, Captain ——, I would have you know that with wasters like these I've added half a Continent to the British Empire!"<sup>1</sup>

### 3

There were unusual incidents in the campaign. For example, one day while Major Laing's Belingwe column was advancing across a grassy windy plain between the Shambo and Tanozo ranges the bugles sounded the "alarm" and "horses in!" Across the plain rose a score of columns of smoke. Then a wall of flame three miles wide came racing towards the force. The column instantly started a grass fire behind its own position and when this had burned out a wide black patch, they occupied it. Hardly had they done so when a sea of flame roared past on either side thirty feet high and miles wide. The heat was terrific but they escaped unscathed.

Thus the Matabele were up to every device to secure an advantage over their enemies.

### 4

Captain Gibbs was in charge of the fort at Gwelo during the rebellion. In order that his maxim-guns should have a free field of fire, he instructed that the shanties which had served as

<sup>1</sup> Related to the author by the Rhodesian pioneer Roux who was present. The prisoner before the court-martial is still living (August, 1933).

homes for the settlers should be razed to the ground. This was done. Not long afterwards Rhodes arrived, determined to assist all whose homes had been destroyed under military necessity. In his own careless way, he sent a native round with a billboard, like a sandwich man, ringing a bell to announce that he proposed to hold a meeting on the square of the village to discuss damage to settlers' homes. The meeting took place. One by one claimants' names were called out.

"At what do you assess your damage?" a clerk would ask.

"Two-hundred pounds."

"Write him out a cheque for that," Rhodes would say and would append his signature. He liquidated these losses out of his own pocket.

Many claims were advanced and despite their extravagance were met uncomplainingly, but Rhodes gradually became resentful of the cupidity of some of the claimants. On the outskirts of the crowd an old Scots blacksmith, MacHattie, was standing with folded arms. He had long, drooping moustaches and side-whiskers. Rhodes's vigilant eye had not missed him, though he had never spoken throughout the proceedings.

"And what do I owe *you*?" he demanded.

"Nothing," said the blacksmith shortly. "I've lost nothing."

"Write that man out a cheque for £25!" rapped out Rhodes, "He's the only man who's told me the truth to-day."

## 5

Rhodes had been anxious to defeat the Matabele without using Imperial troops: for he feared the cost of an extensive campaign. Nevertheless the British Government insisted that the British

forces should be in charge of a General Officer. Major-General Carrington accordingly assumed command on June 1. The Matabele, defeated everywhere in the open, retired into the Matopo Hills. Carrington's vigorous attacks inflicted heavy losses on them there, but resulted in considerable losses to himself: so that he began to feel that at least 5,000 men would be required to surround the enemy and to starve them out. This would have meant the ruin of the Chartered Company.

Now it so happened that a tall Swazi, named Grootboom, had heard from native scouts that the rebels were tired and wanted peace. So he went to Rhodes and volunteered to go into the mountains to sound the native chiefs about it and to come back with information. Two other natives went with him.

They marched towards the rebel camp, travelling only at night. At daybreak they hid in a wood near a stream. There they heard voices and saw two old Matabele women go down to the water bewailing their hunger and the people's poverty. Then Grootboom appeared, tactfully gave them some of his food, and told them to go back and tell their chiefs he was there, and had come to discuss peace. At the same time he tore off a portion of his shirt, saying that it would do for a white flag. If the chiefs wanted peace, he said, they might plant the white flag in the ground at a spot which he indicated.

On the fourth day Grootboom saw the "flag" flying, but no chiefs near it: and he surmised that they were watching him from the bush. The surmise was correct for eventually they came forth and spoke to him. There was an indaba: and they expressed the desire to see Rhodes who was to come with not more than three unarmed companions.

## 6

So Rhodes rode unarmed into the Matopos with three companions—Colonel Colenbrander, Dr. Sauer and Vere Stent<sup>1</sup>—to make peace. They rode into a gloomy ravine: they mounted by a footpath into an open space, the meeting place.

The chiefs wanted peace: but they were in a dangerous mood. Their grievances had fired them with a white heat of passion. A violent speech from one of them as they squatted in the customary circle, might have led to the destruction of the little band: but Rhodes stood there dominating them. Throughout that historic indaba they addressed him as "Baba!" (Great Father!) and more than once when the talk became dangerous his fearless attitude saved them.

"The Mashonas are dogs," said old Gomabulane. "We are not dogs, we are the children of the stars."

"Why then did ye slay women and children?" Rhodes demanded. "That was not the work of men: it was the work of dogs."

Angry murmurs arose among chiefs and warriors.

"Who began the slaying?" retorted Gomabulane and spoke of four Matabele women having been shot, of a dusky bride going to her husband, and being waylaid by a native commissioner and taken to his hut. He spoke of the tyrannies of the Zulu police.

"The Zulu police shall go," said Rhodes.

Through the storm and stress of dangerous debate he gradually won his way, though now and again the fierce murmurs and flashing eyes of the

<sup>1</sup> Vere Stent is still living in Pretoria District. He has described this scene brilliantly in his little book "A Personal Record of Some Incidents in the Life of Cecil Rhodes," published by Maskew Miller and Co., Capetown.

assembly enraged by a recital of wrongs, proved how close was the little band to death.

"Is it peace?" Rhodes asked at last after the passion had gone from the talk.

"It is peace, great father. The eyes are white," said Gomabulane wearily.

And although there was yet another indaba, at which Rhodes and his little party were surrounded by five hundred warriors with assegais and the situation again grew ominous, yet in the end the weapons were put aside and the rebellion died away.

"You have done a great thing for me, Grootboom," said Rhodes afterwards, "What can I do for you?"

"I would like a horse with saddle and bridle, sir."

"You shall have much more than that."

"I don't want it," said Grootboom. "When I leave this camp I shall go north to help the missionaries."

Turning to J. G. McDonald who stood close by, Rhodes said:

"Give Grootboom whenever he asks for it, a hundred acres of land, a waggon, a span of oxen, twelve cows, a horse, and one hundred pounds."

But Grootboom refused to accept these gifts and went north, as he had said, to help the missionaries. He has not been heard of since.

Yet to this day the bequest remains in Rhodes's will. And if ever the old Swazi returns like some ghost from the past the gifts will be there for the asking.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CURSE OF LUKA JANTJE'S SKULL

#### I

**A**LTHOUGH the Jameson Raid had dealt Rhodes a heavy blow, his spectacular courage in the Matopos when he ventured unarmed among the hostile Matabele, made a profound impression upon public opinion. Moreover, his loyalty to Jameson and the magnitude of his Imperial plans had done much to restore his lost prestige. In the Cape the political race between British and Dutch—in other words between Progressive and Bond parties which in effect represented Rhodesism and Krugerism—continued to be neck and neck. First one party gained, then the other, and every man's vote counted.

Of one electoral campaign at that time a story is told about a gift of field knives sent by Rhodes to the Cape Colonial troops then in the field against the Bechuanaland rebels and notably against the chief Luka Jantje. The knives were regarded in some quarters as harmless bribes to potential soldier voters. One of them unfortunately was put to a grim and terrible purpose which excited violent political controversy.

The story begins with an outbreak of rinderpest among the Bechuanaland cattle in 1897. The Government ordered a wholesale slaughter of herds, for rinderpest in those days was a scourge for which there was no cure. Native agitators had told the tribesmen that the white man's real object in thus wantonly slaughtering their cattle—which was indeed all their capital wealth—was to impoverish the tribesmen and force them on



to the labour market. These allegations led to the murder of a Jewish storekeeper, the looting of European cattle and the destruction of property. The tribesmen everywhere revolted. Chief Luka Jantje and other chiefs established themselves with great numbers of men in the fastnesses of the Langeberg, the berg being thirty miles long and eight miles across. Kuruman became the base of the European forces sent up from the Cape to suppress the rising. Young men were forthcoming from all the Cape towns.

A thousand glittering bayonets marked the line of advance of the troops. The attacking wave approached Fighting Kopje on August 26, 1891, a hill obstinately defended by Luka Jantje. The defenders fled into the recesses of the berg. Jantje himself refused to leave the hill. As the attackers mounted the stony slopes he rose up unexpectedly from behind a solitary redoubt and levelled his rifle at Surgeon Smyth; but before he could fire he was shot dead by Sergeant Bruce, the doctor in his excitement clubbing the chief with the butt of his revolver.

The chief was buried forthwith at the foot of Fighting Kop, a brave man who had fought to the death for his people. The body was exhumed later and recognized by one of Jantje's subordinate wives; and it was re-exhumed and again identified by the chief wife.

At the second exhumation an officer was heard to say "I'd like that fellow's skull."

"What's it worth, sir?" one of the men asked.

"A fiver," said the officer.

## 2

One night not long after as the troops were in camp awaiting transport to their homes, a trooper arrived from despatch duty, tired, ill-tempered and

hungry. He searched the camp for food. Over a fire he presently espied a big camp kettle. Lifting the lid he saw to his horror a human head with the lips drawn back, turning over in the swirling water. He fainted.

The story reached Capetown and got overseas. Questions were asked in the House of Commons. The Colonial Office wanted to know the truth. Sir James Sievwright acting as Prime Minister of the Cape for Sir Gordon Sprigg, sent for Mr. Vere Stent, then one of the war correspondents.

"Tell me," he said irritably, "what are the facts about this damned head?"

Vere Stent replied tactfully that when he saw the chief first buried, his body was then intact. The Acting Prime Minister made an impassioned speech that night denouncing those who had spread the slander and concluding: "We must instantly overtake this foul lie!"

However, the officer in possession of the skull went to Edmund Garrett, editor of the *Cape Times* in Capetown, and opening a bag, rolled the grinning skull on the editorial table. Garrett was shocked. He published a sardonic article next day entitled, "Overtaking a Lie." The story excited an embittered controversy in the Cape and was not without political repercussions.<sup>1</sup> The officer concerned had to resign his commission. Although during the second Anglo-Boer war he so distinguished himself that he was recommended for the V.C., yet owing to his previous difficulties the recommendation was not confirmed. Some years after, while a humble shift boss on an East Rand Mine, the fatal skull was still in his room, grinning at him from the walls. But it brought him no prosperity: and thus the curse which in native belief is supposed to rest upon those who mutilate the bodies of native chiefs, was fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> Details supplied to the author by Mr. Vere Stent.

As already stated, the members of the expeditionary force had all been presented with field knives by Rhodes. They presently found themselves enrolled as voters for the Vryburg district.

After the Luka Jantje campaign they entrained to Vryburg to vote for Rhodes and the progressives. Their votes turned the scale in favour of Rhodes's two nominees. The result was, however, repudiated, and a fresh election ordered. When the ex-soldiers next took train to Vryburg to vote, their train suffered some strange delays: and they arrived too late for the polling.

In these circumstances the representatives of the Bond were returned, and Rhodes's nominees were discomfited.

A story, this, which illustrates the strange political shifts and reactions of the days which immediately preceded the Anglo-Boer War!

### 3

However much the public acclaimed Rhodes in the Cape, indeed, he had no easy task to fight his way back to supreme power in Parliament. The elections held in March, 1898, to the Upper House of the Cape Parliament, led to a narrow victory of five for the Progressives with Rhodes at the head. In the election campaign of July, 1898, Schreiner urged the people of Cape Colony not to repeat the "blunders" of 1890 by reinstating Rhodes in power. Rhodes himself was returned with an immense personal majority from Namaqualand, but the Bond party took up the reins with a majority of two or three.

Meanwhile Kruger had visited Steyn, President of the Orange Free State, at Bloemfontein, to concert closer union between the two South African Republics. On February 15, 1897, Sir Alfred Milner was appointed High Commissioner of South Africa.

Sir Alfred Milner sailed straight into troublous political waters. President Kruger's refusal to withdraw the Aliens Immigration Act led Lord Roberts to offer his services in the field. Lord Newton mentions in his "Life of Lord Lansdowne" that Roberts claimed that he had been sent out to retrieve the disaster of Majuba, but, he added: "unfortunately a hasty peace was made. . . . I have a great regard for Lord Milner and am confident that I could work in harmony with him."

The situation on the Rand continued to be critical. The burghers continued to arm; drilling went on nightly. The Uitlanders proclaimed their grievances at meetings, one of which in the Amphitheatre, Johannesburg, was violently broken up.

On May 30, 1899, Milner met Steyn and Kruger at Bloemfontein to explore a way out. As Cecil Headlam states in "The Milner Papers":

"No drama could be more intense than the duel which ensued between these two strong determined men (Milner and Kruger). On one side sat the cultured Englishman, single-handed, wise and iron-willed, fully aware that failure must mean ignominy or war: inexorably resolved to establish the position of Great Britain as the paramount power. . . . On the other side was the burly Voortrekker, in his tightly buttoned frock-coat, a cunning and equally strong-willed Dutchman, rooted in the ambition of a lifetime to establish his country as the predominant state in an all-Dutch Republic."

Milner sought franchise concessions, Kruger demanded a franchise alternative, including the renunciation of British suzerainty, arbitration, and the cession of Swaziland. The conference met on May 31, continuing till June 5. In the end it broke down. Lord Selborne wrote to Milner: "The crisis has come and we are not going to

fail you. Thank God, we have got you as High Commissioner!"

Chamberlain invited Kruger to agree to a joint inquiry into outstanding grievances. Rhodes, in touch with Milner and Chamberlain, declined to believe that Kruger would go to war. Steyn having come into line with Kruger, however, the South African Republic presented a formal ultimatum to the British Government, to which Chamberlain replied:

"Her Majesty's Government have received with great regret the peremptory demands of the Government of the South African Republic. . . . The conditions demanded are such as Her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss."

And so, on October 11, 1899, war broke out between Great Britain and the Transvaal.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ROBERTS AND KITCHENER GO NORTH

#### I

POOR leadership on both sides marked the opening of the campaign. In London, the fact that the War Office had let the nation down was not at first realized, and the crowds went on singing with confidence and gusto: "We'll hang old Kruger on a Sour Apple Tree," to the tune of "John Brown's Body," while Kipling's "Absent Minded Beggar" excited bursts of patriotic enthusiasm. Yet, amply informed as the War Office had been of the approach of war, it was, as usual, quite unprepared. Just as it had been unprepared for the Zulu War of 1879 and the Anglo-Boer War of 1881, so also had it insufficient troops in the field at the outbreak of this war of 1899, with the result that the British were gradually pressed back and penned within Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley. The line of battle bulged towards the Natal coast, and settled along the valleys and the northerly spurs of the Drakensberg.

Thus General Buller, who had been sent out to end the war, was dismayed to find, on arrival at Capetown, that he must split his forces to rescue the troops besieged, and that instead of being able to ensure the protection of the Cape and Natal by marching up irresistibly through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, he must move at once to the relief of Ladysmith at the southern end of the battle line.

But that was ever the way with the War Office.

Buller had sailed in high hopes of leading a glorious campaign. War Office muddling had stultified his plans from the start. All very well was it for Rhodes besieged in Kimberley to declare savagely: "Buller's making an awful mess of things!"; there was certainly truth in Buller's anguished complaint after the war, "When I landed at Capetown I was a General without an army!"

Republican tactics were equally poor. The Boer Commander-in-Chief, Joubert, sweeping towards Natal, allowed *his* forces to be divided and held up in futile sieges when obviously his proper course would have been to have boldly raided south into the Cape Colony while holding the Natal front lightly. This would have roused the hesitating Dutch farmers in the Cape and would have made it vastly more difficult for the British to have made their later brilliant march north under Roberts and Kitchener to Bloemfontein, Vereeniging, Johannesburg and Pretoria. That march automatically drew off the besieging forces and relieved Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith.

## 2

The first shot in the campaign was fired on October 12, 1899, at Kraaipan, a small place south of Mafeking in the Cape. A page of adventure was certainly turned there.

At Kraaipan occurred the historic Boer attack on the armoured train. Here is an account of it by E. J. Collins, who nearly lost his life in the affair: "Shortly before noon on October 11, 1899, a detachment of 15 men and an officer was detailed from the B. Squadron Protectorate Regiment in Mafeking, to man the locally-built armoured train 'Mosquito'. This had to escort the last refugee train south to Vryburg. I had been on outlying picket all night before, but being

the only machine-gunner in our troop, I was called on to take charge of the Nordenfeld gun, an old and obsolete thing firing one-pound shot.

"We duly arrived at Vryburg that evening and handed over the passenger train to the south bound. Instructions then came from Baden Powell to wait for a train with a truck of ammunition and some seven-pounder guns, and to bring them back to Mafeking. For some reason or other, no doubt deliberate on somebody's part, the train from the south was delayed and arrived twenty-four hours late. In the meantime the local burghers at Vryburg were being shown around our armoured train, greatly to their own edification and our dismay. I remonstrated in vain.

"At last, about dark on October 12, the train arrived with Baden Powell's ammunition and guns, accompanied by an armoured engine which had been fitted out by De Beers in Kimberley. We began the run back, the armoured engine being the pilot. Meanwhile we had had word that the wires were cut and that Boers were somewhere along the road.

"We arrived at Maribogo about 11 p.m. Sergeant Matthews of the Cape Police warned us that the rail was cut, all wires down and the Boers in force with artillery farther on at Kraaipan. He advised us to wait till daylight, but the officer was anxious to proceed, so we went on in the darkness, picking up all the plate-laying gangs we could on the way to replace the rails taken out. The driver of the pilot engine had instructions to run cautiously and to keep in strict touch with us. About half-a-mile south of Kraaipan, when, rounding a curve, we came upon him derailed.

"Lieut. Nesbitt at once got the gangs out to re-rail the engine. The torch lamps we utilized to place the jacks threw us into splendid target relief for Brother Boer, who was watching on three



sides of us. At exactly twenty minutes to twelve midnight (I took out my watch to mark the time) they let us have a scattering volley from two sides.

"Of course, there was a stampede for the armoured truck. After a short delay, a desultory fire recommenced from three sides. We fired back as well as we could at the flashes, but with little effect. Things remained thus until towards daylight, when, knowing that a stationary mark would be a cinch for the artillery at daybreak, I suggested to the officer that our engine, which was still on the road, should retire with the trucks to Maribogo, at all events till daybreak. He approved, and I volunteered to get the engine back.

"I scrambled out of the truck under fire and reached the engine. As soon as I got her to move back a little, a veritable storm of bullets was let loose. I was lying on my back on the footplate, reaching up and tapping the regulator. Just then day broke sufficiently for the artillery to get a sight. Over came a shell as a sighter, then another, and another, until the eighth one caught the corner of the cab and carried it away. The ninth one came plop into the boiler of the engine, and, believe me, the scalding steam and water from the fire-hole door and ash-pan drove me off that foot-plate quicker than anything else could have done.

"I was so badly scalded that I could not rise. Presently a white flag was put up from the armoured truck, whereupon the firing ceased and our whiskered friends came up. There was talk among the young ones of shooting us, but the grey-beards stopped that. The officer and thirteen troopers with some of the railwaymen were taken off to Pretoria, while I lay under guard in the platelayer's cottage.

"You may guess what I suffered on the subsequent ox-waggon journey over the kopjes to Kernania and back to Maribogo, my body scalded all over, and nothing but an army blanket to lie on. However, they laid me up until just before the relief of Mafeking by Colonel Mahon, whom I met on the road with his flying column."

## 3

It is said that when the Boers captured the armoured train at Kraaipan they seized £40,000 in sovereigns. This treasure was removed to the Boer camp near Bloemfontein in the dead of night. The Commandant himself and two others loaded the boxes on a waggon and proceeded across the veld some thirty miles south-east of Bloemfontein, where they buried them. The country thereabouts is bare and undulating and devoid of characteristic sign. So to mark the cache they shot certain draught animals and left them lying over the spot.

Afterwards the Commandant and one of his companions were killed in the war. This left only one possessor of the secret. This man took an old prospector into his confidence, and the latter, to test the story, approached the authorities in Pretoria and learned that a big sum had certainly been taken when the armoured train was captured at Kraaipan. The two men thereupon set out to find the cache. Alas, during the interval between burial and search, the bones had been scattered. The skull of a horse was found, to which some piccanins had attached wheels, converting it into a toy. One likely bit of ground which looked as if the earth had been dug over some time before, was examined—without result. Drills were put down throughout the farm, but

the treasure was never found. So that searchers believe to-day that the gold was dug up and taken to Bloemfontein not long after interment.

## 4

Buller was stern and fearless. But as he lay camped before Colenso striving to relieve Ladysmith, and saw the mountains and the sinking sun blackening mighty kloof and escarpment, he might well have quailed. For he had to pass this formidable barrier to reach the beleaguered town. And hidden up there in the rocks were the burghers, masters in open warfare, dead shots, grimly resolved to hold him off.

Buller attacked. Slender lines of khaki went up towards the frowning wall and withered and died! Again and again that happened. The gallant young Roberts, son of Lord Roberts, fell, galloping with the guns. When Buller's men at length won the summit of Spion Kop, many were blown to pieces there. The survivors were foolishly ordered to retire, although the Republicans had already evacuated their positions.

They returned when the British had gone. And thus was a British victory converted into defeat.

## 5

It was at Colenso, after the battle of Spion Kop, that the British artillery shelled, with puzzling futility, a gun-site high up the mountains. Every time the Boer gun spoke black smoke belched through its muzzle and a shell moaned and exploded in the British trenches. Try as they might the gunners simply could not silence it. The ghostly gun went on shelling for two days. Several men were killed and a span of oxen blown

to pieces. Certain Colonial officers, therefore, crawled forth in the early morning to make closer acquaintance with the mysterious weapon. They climbed up dongas and around rocks, getting ever nearer the scattered Boer positions. At last in the grey of dawn, when in the enemy lines they were able to see at a rough level with themselves and from a distance of a few yards, the mysterious gun-barrel. It was being raised. There was a "whoof!" and a mass of black smoke shot up. Instantly several figures rushed off and vanished. But almost simultaneously a gun—a real gun—roared from close to where the watchers lay. The British, it seemed, had been firing on a smoke-producing dummy while the real gun was hidden in another position.

Much excited, the officers stole back to their lines. They were seen, but escaped across the open under hostile shrapnel fire. They made a report. In two shots the real gun was knocked out.

More big British reverses. Buller, who loved his men as they loved him, drank deeply the cup of humiliation. In a moment of incredible weakness he advised Sir George White to surrender Ladysmith, advice which Sir George boldly ignored. But when Lords Roberts and Kitchener swept past with their great array over to the West, Buller's foes were drawn off to oppose this advance on the goldfields. The Boers melted from the face of the mountains and Buller marched on to the relief of the town and its famishing garrison.

During the siege of Kimberley Rhodes in his white clothes, rode carelessly about the outskirts of the town, an admirable mark for snipers. He urged Roberts not to abandon Kimberley on his great march north to Pretoria. Roberts quietly expressed the hope that Kimberley would hold out. Rhodes, furiously angry, said: "We have

no thought of surrender, but we are getting anxious about the British army."

Fortunately General Kekewich declined to transmit the message.

## 6

The British had many scores to pay off against Cronje. For it was Cronje who had besieged Colonel Winsloe in the Potchefstroom Fort, and had captured Jameson at Doornkop in 1896. It was this self-same Cronje who was now to be defeated and captured by Lords Roberts and Kitchener at Paardeberg on the anniversary of Majuba. The affair was the turning point of the war.

As we have seen, with the northward advance of Lord Roberts towards Bloemfontein and Pretoria, Boer forces investing towns such as Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking on the flank of the advance, were drawn off to stem the tide. The Roberts-Kitchener army marched between this triangle of invested cities, and the moral effect of a great army of 20,000 men moving forward to strike at the very heart of the Republics at Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria, was to strike dismay into the hearts of the Republicans. Cronje withdrew 4,000 men from the Kimberley siege and, sensing a trap, hurried eastward to help defend Bloemfontein. He was constantly harried by General Kelly-Kenny. Unfortunately for him he took with him slow-moving waggons and refugee Boer women and children: and so while trailing along to Bloemfontein, Roberts and Kitchener planned to cut him off with forced marches, to surround him, just as Cronje had surrounded Jameson at Doornkop and had captured his men and guns.

Great bodies of British troops marched all

night. The Highland Brigade made a forced march along the south bank of the Modder. They travelled light. They headed Cronje off. He took refuge in the bed of the Sand River and dug deep trenches there. Completely surrounded, he was bombarded at intervals with howitzers and lyddite shells. Kitchener was for intensifying the bombardment and bringing matters to an end, but Roberts refused, wishing to limit the loss of life. Cronje thus remained in a state of hopeless siege for eight days. The Boers, of course, had the natural cover of the devious windings of the river bed: the British, on the other hand, had to find cover behind ant-heaps or in trenches hastily dug in the open.

There were many casualties on both sides. The scene out there on the veld with the British troops lying under poor cover, with rifle fire crackling ceaselessly and yellow lyddite bursting and thundering over the doomed force in the river bed, was strange indeed. Incidentally the British suffered great hardship through the loss of a convoy on the Riet River just before the battle.

Perhaps one of the youngest participators in the engagement was a little London stretcher-bearer. He had augmented his age by several years in order to be with the troops and had been selected for stretcher-bearing because, as he used to say, he was small and offered no target. He saw all the fighting, saw how the hot sun caught the bare legs of the Highlanders lying in the open, how men were consumed with such fierce thirst—especially the wounded—that an armed guard had to be placed over the water-carts. He fought a fellow stretcher-bearer for a front position in his team when taking wounded from the vicinity of the Boer lines. They fought to a finish. The Cockney using his fists vigorously beat the Welshman and won the position. Both, it seems, were

afraid of being shot in the back—a type of wound looked at askance by senior officers. Obviously the rear bearers of a stretcher were more liable to get hit there when taking casualties away from the river, even if, as was assumedly the case, Boer marksmen never fired deliberately on them.

Cronje surrendered with 4,069 men and six guns. The defeated force came out of the trenches. Women could be seen in groups on the river banks staring stolidly from under their white sun kapjes. One whimpering youngster had his thumb shot off. He was treated with the utmost tenderness. When officers had occasion to speak to the women, they behaved with studied deference, saluting before they spoke.

The river came down in flood. It washed away dead horses which had lain there swollen in the sun. The Cockney stretcher-bearer and his Welsh friend watched the Highlanders cross the now rising river to take up positions on the northern bank. As they crossed, the swirling waters caught their kilts, whereupon with one accord they raised them up to their shoulders quite oblivious of the proprieties. The women, worn as they were by privation and bombardment, burst into laughter; but the "Jocks" saw nothing humorous in the situation and went dourly across.

Meanwhile the engineers built pontoons, so that all the prisoners crossed in safety. Cronje himself, a stocky bearded man with a queer flat-brimmed hat crushed down on his head, came forth dejectedly and surrendered. Thus was won the battle of Paardeberg on February 27, 1900, nineteen years to the day, after Majuba.

## CHAPTER XX

### A CITY IN TRAVAIL

#### I

**B**UT what was happening on the goldfields while Lord Roberts was approaching?

Grass had grown in the streets, weeds in the gardens. Banks and stores had put up shutters and barbed wire. Everything bespoke war. The burgher night-watch challenged stragglers in the dark. Boer families moved into the empty homes of the refugees.

Then the dogs! How forlornly they nosed in the gutters! Provisions grew scarce. Boer women, wives of Republican Police whose wages had not been paid, raided the shops demanding food: a file of native women driven from their location to work, walked along wailing, their babies on their backs. The wailing filled the quiet air.

There was looting and sabotage. On October 2, 1899, just before Kruger declared war, the Rand-Cape mail going south with the September output of mine gold was boarded by burghers at Vereeniging, the Transvaal border town, and £800,000 of gold stolen. It was sent back to the Pretoria Treasury. The burghers also raided Johannesburg stores and seized the cash—violence which met with no resistance.

The war spirit intensified. Commandos clattered through the empty streets. Constant rumours came through of British reverses. Uitlanders assumed hasty disguises, and fled over the border.



## 2

The Republicans hunted prominent British "reformers." They were particularly anxious to capture H. C. Hull,<sup>1</sup> prominent in anti-Republican agitation, and who became later Minister of Finance under the first responsible British Government in the Transvaal.

Hull hid in a mine shaft on the old Ferreira Mine in an underground suite of rooms. Tiring of concealment he determined to escape. He grew a piratical beard and bluffed his way over the frontier.

He actually invited the suspicious Boer Commandant who rode up to him when about to cross, to sell him his horse, a piece of effrontery that persuaded his pursuer that he could not possibly be the wanted man. Incidentally, Hull was one of the best poker players of his day.

Clem Webb, another reformer resolute to the last in claiming Uitlander rights, one of the two chief speakers at the great Amphitheatre meeting of Uitlanders broken up by Republicans in Johan-

<sup>1</sup> When H. C. Hull visited England shortly before the grant of responsible Government to the Transvaal, he went to stay with Sigismund Neumann, the famous South African financier. Neumann's estate was close to Balmoral, the imposing Scottish residence of King Edward. One night His Majesty commanded Neumann and Hull to dinner, and the latter was not a little interested in the work of the King's Marshal in seeing that the guests, of whom there were many, including various British Peers, went in in order of precedence. Thus he noted that a mere youth who happened to be a Duke filed in before a white-haired Earl. Hull and Neumann entered at the tail-end of the procession.

When dinner was over and the guests were about to depart—again in strict order of precedence—Hull turned to Neumann and in a veritable stage whisper said:

"If you and I are the last to go, Neumann, I'll — well see that I go out before you."

There was an explosion of mirth. His Majesty sent to know the cause of it. Hull by the exercise of much tact managed to extricate himself from a slightly difficult situation.

King Edward, broad-minded and lover of life as he was, always remained partial to Hull.

"A rough diamond!" was His Majesty's comment to his own biographer, Sir Sydney Lee; but there was a kindly stress on the word "diamond."

nesburg just before the outbreak of war—Clem Webb also became a marked man. He sent his wife and family away to the Cape, and, disguising himself as "Dr. Knowles" and adorning his resolute chin with a long red beard, he hid in an attic in Long's Hotel, Johannesburg.

One night he emerged with a nurse. He strode over the pavement to his cart in full view of two detectives who failed to recognize him, and drove out with the nurse to Baragwanath. His plan was to travel along the road to Viljoen's Drift, to board the Cape mail there, and to escape from Republican territory.

He was met on the road by a supposed relative of the "patient." This confederate, seated in his own cart, loudly informed Webb that a nurse would not be required. Greatly annoyed she returned to town. She might possibly have suspected Webb and given him away, for while the fugitive "doctor" and his escort were driving south towards Viljoen's Drift, they presently heard the clatter of pursuing hoofs.

"You'd better jump off and hide in that cutting," the driver urged.

Instantly Webb leaped out and hid while the cart drove on. A burgher detachment galloped up. The officer stopped the vehicle.

"Whom had you in your cart?"

"Nobody."

The burghers looked unavailingly under the seat, cross-examined the driver, and at last permitted the cart to proceed. They rode back to the city. Webb emerged from the cutting, made off across country towards a mine manager's house at Roodepoort, disguised himself as a priest and again sought the Rand Train to the Cape. He boarded it, and sat down in a compartment. He had not gone far before two Republican detectives burst in. One flashed a torch in his face.

"Take that away!" grumbled the priest with a touch of clerical asperity. The detectives, withdrew. But when the train crossed the border into the Cape and left Republican territory, the "priest" took off his badges of office, and announced: "I am Clem Webb!" much to the amusement of his fellow passengers.

Such were the little subterfuges of war.

### 3

Gold. The burghers needed it: gold to pay the officials, gold for guns and munitions, gold to win the war. The roar of the Rand's mine batteries, like the sea-fret on quiet nights, was dying down, and many native mine-workers had trekked away over the hills. The burghers had to work certain mines for gold with unwilling native labour and to scrape the plates of others no longer working. Plenty of gold had been left.

R. J. Hogan, Republican Director of Telegraphs in Krugersdorp, was ordered to secure as much gold as possible from a "clean-up" of the mines, and to hand it over to the State Mining Engineer. He busied himself with the task and took away three lots. Two of these he consigned to the State Mining Engineer in Pretoria as requested, and the third he lodged for the time being in his safe. Then he received telegraphic instructions from State Secretary Reitz of Pretoria that as the British forces were rapidly approaching he must destroy all papers and hide the telegraphic instruments where they would not be found. He accordingly took the instruments and gold by night and threw them down a disused shaft near Krugersdorp. At the conclusion of the war he went to the British authorities and reported the fact that the gold had been thrown down the shaft, at the same time claiming a reward for

revealing the cache. The Director of Military Intelligence undertook that he should have a reward of 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. of the value of the gold. Hogan thereupon led a posse of police to the spot and after several days' work the gold was recovered. Subsequently it was claimed by the French Rand Mine and the West Rand Consolidated Mines, and through the Chamber of Mines a proportionate division of the metal as between these properties was agreed upon.

J. H. Munnik, the Republican State Mining Engineer, strove anxiously for more and more gold. He rode busily from one mine to another. He collected many bars of it and assembled it at the Robinson Mine, from where it was to be escorted in the dead of night to Pretoria and then (so it was said) sent on to President Kruger's railway coach at Machadodorp. The venerable old President, stricken with calamity, was about to retreat towards Delagoa Bay—his last journey in his own land.

## 4

Nearer came Lord Roberts. His army like a monstrous snake with hood extended ten miles across the veld, was gliding on. Whenever it struck it killed. The shadow of the hood would soon loom over the Southern Transvaal coal mines, then over the Rand gold mines, and the great golden treasure would pass into his hands.

Bloemfontein fell. Northward pressed the khaki hosts. Gleaming yellow dust rose high behind them. Kroonstad fell. Retiring burgher horsemen streamed and splashed in thousands across the Vaal at Viljoen's Drift and established themselves in Vereeniging, the border town between the Transvaal and Orange Free State, thirty-six miles south of Johannesburg. Here were coal

mines, and dynamite and provisions, many of the requisites of war indeed, for Vereeniging had been built up by the two famous Jewish financiers Lewis and Marks, who had erected dams, irrigated land, mined coal, and made the desert blossom.

Now the continuance of the swift advance of the British depended largely on the maintenance of coal supplies. The long supply trains which followed and fed the troops needed coal. Girouard, who was in charge of British Transport trains, was anxious to get this coal from the Vereeniging mines.

The burghers in Vereeniging knew this and determined to blow up the mines. With almost extravagant courtesy they formally notified the officials of the Vereeniging Estates Company of this intention.

Loyal adherents of the company in Vereeniging—J. G. Torrance,<sup>1</sup> the secretary, and Tom Leslie, contractor<sup>2</sup>—determined to save the mines. As guardians of the property of their employers they deemed it their duty to do so.

A horseman set out after sundown for the camp of Roberts and Kitchener to notify them of the intention of the burghers to blow up the mines.

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Torrance will be remembered also for his important work in building up the annual Witwatersrand Agricultural Show, one of the biggest events of its kind south of the Line.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tom Leslie is one of the grand old men of Africa. In consideration of his services to science he was made an honorary Doctor of Science by the University of the Witwatersrand. He has a remarkable collection of South African palaeolithic and neolithic implements at his house at Vereeniging; indeed he considers that area (about the Vaal River) to have been the home of a considerable colony of primitive men. He was the accredited discoverer of a fossil forest in the bed of the Vaal, the trees of which, of long extinct type, he believes to have been more than one hundred million years old. Dr. Tom Leslie lives picturesquely with his thoughts. He knew all the big figures of Africa. Kruger, Rhodes, Sir Alfred Milner (who went to see him on his last visit to South Africa just before his death), General Botha, Joseph Chamberlain and General Smuts. Of them all he was perhaps most impressed with the towering personality of Rhodes. "You could not be with him for five minutes," he said, "without realizing that he was bigger and different from, and head and shoulders above, other men."

Then in the dead of night Tom Leslie took his waggons to the company's dynamite store, loaded them up, and drove them across the Vaal into a quarry, where he off-loaded the explosive and covered it with sacks and straw. Torrance meanwhile hid his firm's valuables in certain great chimney flues. Incidentally at this time a sum of £10,000 was made available—it is not necessary to state by whom or who tried to utilize it—to bribe Republican officials not to blow up the Vaal River Bridge or to destroy railway points at Vereeniging. It says much for burgher integrity, however, that only £100 of this was spent and that the Vaal River Bridge was blown up within sight of the oncoming British troops. Torrance himself said in after years, "As a soldier, the Boer proved himself a patriotic gentleman and I have the greatest admiration for him. I felt it my duty to oppose the destruction of the mines, and in spite of my deep respect for the Boer, I do not regret having done what I regarded then, and still regard, as my duty."

Leslie and Torrance, hearing that the Republicans were about to arrest them, crossed the Vaal in the darkness and hid on the Free State side. When after a day or two Roberts' army hove in sight, they returned before it into Vereeniging.

The British high command was gratified to find the mines intact. The army took over the whole of the available coal and pressed on into the Transvaal towards Johannesburg and the Rand goldfields.

## 5

In Pretoria, meanwhile, they had planned the destruction of the Rand gold mines. Judge de Kock led the movement for sabotage. He even

got permission to go to Johannesburg to co-opt officials to destroy the mines. Dr. Krause determined to oppose any attempts at sabotage, to dispatch all available gold to the President, and thus to serve the Republic.

As Lord Roberts was approaching Johannesburg, Judge de Kock rode into that town from Pretoria at the head of one hundred burghers. He saw a great quantity of bar gold dumped near the main Robinson shaft ready for despatch to President Kruger in Pretoria. The sight angered him. Suppose it fell into the hands of the English. What a windfall! It must not be allowed to fall into their hands. He hurried to the mine office where Dr. Krause was in conclave with Commandant Van Diggelen, Officer in Charge of the Police guard. He halted his men outside and went in.

"I am here to blow up the mines," he announced, "and I protest against all this gold being left about. It should have been sent to Pretoria!"

Instantly Dr. Krause locked the door. A moment later he and Van Diggelen had thrown themselves on de Kock and had overpowered him. Then Dr. Krause hurried outside, flourishing a sheaf of papers. The commando seemed restive and suspicious.

"Where's our officer?" they demanded.

"Inside, discussing important operations," Dr. Krause cried in his high-pitched voice. "Who's in charge here?"

"I, Captain McCallum."

"Your General wants you to take up positions on the Ferreira Mine. The British are advancing and General Botha wants help."

The ruse succeeded. Away thundered the commando in a cloud of dust, and thus were the mines saved. Judge de Kock was sent back under arrest to Pretoria; and when that afternoon

General Botha, the Boer generalissimo, was told of it all he entirely approved of Dr. Krause's action.

In the darkness the veld police loaded the gold on a waggon and conveyed it to Pretoria.

## 6

Rumour. One rumour followed another. Like locusts in flight they smote the heads and ears of the residents. Rumour had it that twenty-five mines had been drilled for dynamiting, that the larger buildings of the city were to be blown to the ground. One woman in a room at the top of a big block kept a rope ladder by her bed in case of emergency. There was plot and counter-plot. But to this day nobody knows whether the affair of Munnik and the four masked men was part of a British plot, or, as Chief Justice Gregorowski put it at the trial, "mere ruffianism."

This is the story. One day a stranger came to Munnik, acting, as mentioned, as State Mining Engineer. His offices were at the Robinson Mine.

"I've just been discharged by the Manager of the City and Suburban Mine," the man said, "and I want revenge. I'll tell you something. They've been hoarding gold and weapons there."

"How do you know?"

"I've worked there and know what's what. . . . Come with me in my cart. . . ."

Munnik decided to go. But he took his revolver. As they reached the mine, crossing the little bridge that separated mine from street, the stranger, whose name was Dempsey, drew Munnik into a small bedroom. Then he whipped out a revolver. Instantly Munnik did the same. Both fired together, the weapons making one report. Masked men rushed in and Munnik fell, stunned by a blow on the head. When he came to, his



hands were handcuffed behind him, and it was with difficulty that he had stumbled to his feet.

"Now," said Dempsey, sitting on the bed beside him, "I want to know what your little game is. You've previously gone to the City and Suburban and have ordered holes to be sunk in the ground. You've stopped work on the Wolhuter Mine. You've gone out to Boksburg on horseback."

Munnik nodded, for the description of his movements was correct.

"I know—all your movements are known. Now tell me," Dempsey continued, "when do you intend to blow up this mine and the other mines? . . . To-night we'll capture Commandant Schutte, and we'll hold you both as hostages for the safety of the mines. I know your people. I fought against them at Majuba. . . ."

At that moment Munnik's glance fell on his hat.

"That shot was damned close," he said, seeking a diversion.

"Yours was closer. . . ."

But now Dempsey, hiding his real purpose no longer, said: "We want funds." (Whether he meant funds for secret service or more plunder was not apparent). Munnik eventually gave his word to pay his captors £200, and to say nothing about the outrage until eight o'clock next morning. . . . He kept his word. But, having closely observed the features of one of the men through his large-eyed mask, he was able to give such information as led to the arrest of three of them at 8.45 next morning.

He saw Dempsey under arrest and took out his watch. "I promised to say nothing until eight o'clock," he said.

"You did."

"I've kept my word."

Dempsey was sentenced to seven years.

While in custody he managed to smuggle a dispatch to Major Karri Davies—a dispatch that was intercepted. The Boers described it as “very interesting” but it was never published.

## 7

But now the guns were thundering grimly at the gates of the city. Lord Roberts was closing in. Excited civilians went into the streets. Bullets zipped and spurted in the sand. Sight-seers were ordered indoors: street fighting was expected at any moment for resolute burghers had sworn to defend the town to the last. Suddenly British scouts came galloping through the Eastern suburbs, making for the water-works. . . . A Boer maxim rattled high up from the Fort overlooking the town. . . . Troops poured in. . . . The commandos retired, Dr. Krause having counselled the surrender of the town in order that it might not be destroyed. It was whispered that the British army had captured the line of the reef.

Afterwards endless battalions of troops marched through Johannesburg. With them rode the dignified little Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, and the tall, stern Kitchener.

The Republican flag was hauled down: the Union Jack rose in its place.

After the great drama, the comedy! One of the first results of the vast influx of troops was a water shortage. There was a heavy demand for bath water; the grime of the long victorious march was deeply ingrained. Aristocratic members of the staffs of Lords Roberts and Kitchener crowded into the seven bath rooms at Heath's Hotel singing as they drank their whiskeys and towelling with the vigour that goes with victory. When Kitchener

himself demanded a bath in his bedroom, however, water supplies had already run out. There was not a drop in the pipes. A bath was hurriedly brought into his Lordship's room and a hundred bottles of soda water emptied into it. That bath cost five pounds. But what did it matter? Lord Kitchener, as his batman said, was worth the money.

Lord Roberts, the generalissimo, small, grave, precise and courteous, a perfect type of the Victorian gentleman, had four big Indian servants who stood silently over him with drawn swords. They prevented all strangers from approaching. A harried hotel servant who attempted to pass them with a basin of eggs, was unceremoniously waved back.

"Let the man pass!" shrilled the exasperated queen of the servery, "these are for pancakes for the commander-in-chief!"

But a great city had been taken. And the world's chief source of gold had passed into British hands.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE PASSING OF "JACKAROO" MORANT

#### I

QUEENSLAND. The scene changes now to Cloncurry, Northern Queensland, the land of the stockmen, bush and gold, where the sun scorches and shrivels and the rivers run north into the Gulf. Strange territory this, which has bred big men, tough and good men, with an infinite capacity for friendship!

One Sunday in 1886 nine Cloncurry stockmen were sitting on a fence doing nothing. To do this successfully is not always easy; but they were doing it well, thanks to that incredible jackaroo, Harry Morant, who had come to the station not long since wearing monocle, stock, and immensely wide riding breeches.

The stockmen had looked disdainfully at him at first. But he made them laugh. How he made them laugh to see him mount a horse and slide ruefully under its belly, having forgotten to tighten the girths! They gave him the worst nags on the station, admonishing him with many furtive nods and winks not to let old George, who was due for pension shortly, sit down and roll on him. But he took it all in good part. Somehow he seemed possessed of qualities which intrigued them, qualities the more engaging perhaps because they were so elusive.

Now among the idlers on the fence was Jim Cartie, the star rider, who spoke about a fierce mare which nobody had yet been able to ride. According to him she was unrideable.

"But, I'll have a go at her, boys," he said.

So the mare was brought along, a nasty glint in her eye. Jim Cartie mounted her skilfully, whereupon the mare instantly leaped in the air and threw him on the broad of his back. The stockmen grinned. Their delight was unbounded, for she had beaten the pride of Cloncurry. It was then, however, that "Jackaroo" Morant, who had been watching the affair open-mouthed, dropped his monocle and lisped, "A pound to half a cwoon, I wide that mare for twenty minutes!"

It was as good as a travelling show. The mirthful men on the fence pulled out their money and declared the bets on, while Morant retired to his hut, to emerge presently in well-cut riding coat, dazzling snow-white stock, gold-pin and the widest of riding breeches. "You never saw such a get-up," said the stockmen afterwards.

The mare was led up. The men on the fence awaited the great moment when Morant would also thump the good Australian earth as better men had thumped it before him.

A sudden hush. What was this? The jackaroo was examining the gear, a thing he had never done before. He took off his hat and slipped it quietly under the cheek of the bridle over the mare's eye. Adroitly he tightened the near rein, then got a firm grip of the ear, and, with his knee against the animal's shoulder and his foot in the iron, put his hand over the monkey strap and slipped into the saddle like an artist.

Instantly the mare whipped her head between her legs. She gave a flying plunge, dropped her shoulder so that the rider's foot all but touched the earth. She bucked, spun half-way round, Morant sticking to her grimly, inexorably. The stockmen gaped. They had been done, and they knew it. The minutes passed. The mare sweated, snorted, foamed, bucked herself out.

At the end, the rider was still undefeated in the saddle.

Jim Cartie was the first to jump off the fence.

"Boy," he said extending his hand, "I've lost my cash. But by God I lose it willingly! I wouldn't have missed this for worlds. . . . Who the hell are you?"

Morant smiled as he shook the horny hand proffered him: "Johnny Raw, the New Chum," he grinned, and went back to his hut.

2

Other things happened. Morant proved himself the very soul of versatility. He out-shot them all. He put on the horse-hair gloves, and out-boxed them. As a sprinter he outran them. Yet he kept them in the dark—would never say who he was. On one occasion only did he let a little light into the darkness. Ernest Warby, the station manager, for whom he had taken a fancy, often rode with him far into the bush.

"What do you make of these lines, Warby," he asked one day, "written by a friend of mine?"

Bluey the cattle dog's almost asleep,  
The pine-sparks fly and the embers glow,  
While the horse-bells ring and the crickets cheep  
And the black ducks call in the swamp below.

Night-dews are drenching the tasselled grass,  
Away in the west the moon rides low,  
And the bushman's wakeful fancies pass  
To the light o' love of a year ago."

Verse after verse he reeled off, all revealing an abiding love of the bush and deep knowledge of its life.

"How did you learn all this?" Warby demanded.

"From a friend of mine."

He would say no more. But Warby knew he must have written it himself, so he said, "The man who wrote that knew the bush. You wrote it of course. Who the devil are you?"

Morant smiled and shook his head.

All he would admit was that he knew his Australia. He had grown to love its wild spaces, its lonely bush, the grand men who roughed it, and the moon that rode high over the Mulga and Gidga scrub.

### 3

Fifteen years elapsed. Warby campaigning with the British colonial troops in the Anglo-Boer war, and incidentally present at the reliefs of Ladysmith and Mafeking, began to hear of certain queer doings near the Spelonken, a savage region north of Pretoria in the Transvaal.

Kitchener had sanctioned the formation of the Bushveld Carbineers early in 1901 for special work in the Northern Transvaal. But in spite of the Carbineers, the Boers under General Beyers continued to do considerable damage. They blew up trains and captured patrols.

### 4

The Carbineers, a mixed corps of 350 men, had fallen into easy ways. Once they captured a quantity of drink from a convoy, hid it, and returned to camp drunk. Then certain Australian officers took charge. They enforced discipline, found and destroyed the liquor stocks, and in doing so incurred the displeasure of certain of the men.

On the night of August 5, 1901, Captain Hunt with eighteen Carbineers made an attack on Commandant Viljoen's homestead. Misled as to the strength of the defending force they got close up to the house. They were received with sudden

murderous fire. Some withdrew and took cover. Captain Hunt did not; he rushed across the stoep, thrust his revolver through the window, firing rapidly and creating havoc inside. Commandant Viljoen himself was killed. But the fierce figure at the window was not allowed to remain unchallenged. A bullet presently pierced his breast. He fell back and dropped moaning off the stoep.

News of his death was brought to the Lieutenant at the camp. Its effect on him was terrible. He flared up. "None of you knew that man as I did," he cried. "He was a man—a man I tell you!—and now we're going to get our own back!"

He led 45 men into the neighbourhood of Viljoen's farm, learned the direction taken by the commando, also that when Hunt's body was found it had been stripped, and that the face bore evidence of maltreatment. The neck, too, had been broken. (Lord Kitchener subsequently declared that there was nothing to support these allegations.)

The Lieutenant hurried on to exact vengeance. He rode many miles with his men that night. They came upon the commando in laager at the foot of a small range of kopjes. They fired, surprising the Boers, who shouting "Machtig! Machtig!" abandoned the waggons and disappeared into the hills. The Carbineers closed on the laager and burned the waggons. A certain Visser, hiding under a vehicle, was taken prisoner. The Lieutenant alleged that he was wearing Captain Hunt's tunic.

Visser was taken out and shot.

## 5

The Lieutenant gave no quarter after that. He took prisoner after prisoner and had them all shot. For every prisoner shot he put a notch



in his carbine. To those who protested against the shootings, he said: "I have my orders—Captain Hunt's orders—no more prisoners!"

Rumours of the shootings got abroad. An old German missionary, named Nesse, got into his Cape-cart one day and drove away from the camp towards Pietersberg. Before he went he was cross-examined by the Lieutenant, and was then seen to be emotional and excited. He was allowed to go, however, and drove on. An hour later Lieutenant Handcock, armed and on horseback, rode off rapidly, also towards Pietersberg, along a road different from that taken by the missionary.

Some days later the German was found dead in his cart, shot through the breast, the cart wedged between two trees. Who could have done this? Could it have been one of the lieutenants, in the belief, perhaps, that the missionary was on his way to report the high-handed shootings? Or was the murderer some unattached robber wandering about the countryside?

The extreme seriousness of the crime was enhanced by Germany's anxiety to intervene in the war, by the Kaiser's and King Edward's personal enmities, and by the certainty that the Lieutenant's actions had given a handle to those who were striving to intensify feeling in France and Russia against Britain. Germany pressed for drastic action. The lieutenants and several others were tried by Court-Martial. On the charge of the murder of the missionary Hesse they were acquitted. On other charges they were sentenced to death.

Who, then, was this grim lieutenant who pursued so inexorably his lust for vengeance?

He was the "Jackaroo" Morant, who, sixteen years before had ridden the big mare to a standstill at Cloncurry. He was the same Morant—yet changed by the tragedy of war. Little flashes

of his old gaiety sometimes returned; almost his last act indeed was to write ironic verse in which his irresistible sense of humour prevailed. This was what he wrote the night before execution:

In prison cell I'm doomed to sit,  
A damned crestfallen chappy,  
And own to you I feel a bit  
Inclined to be unhappy.

It really ain't the place nor time  
To reel off rhyming diction,  
But yet I'll write a final rhyme  
Awaiting crucifixion.

Whatever end they may decide  
Quick lime or bilin' ile, sir,  
We'll do our best whate'er betide  
To finish off in style, sir.

Let's toss a bumper down our throat  
Before we pass to Heaven  
And toast the trim-set petticoat  
We leave behind in Devon.

6

To his friend, Whitton, who had also been sentenced to death, but was reprieved and subsequently pardoned by the King, he said:

"Good-bye. It's hard luck and a sideways ending. . . . Tell them in Melbourne I'll write no more verses. . . . I'm going into laager in the morning!"

When the firing party was drawn up, Morant and his fellow prisoner, Handcock, lit cigarettes. To the officer in charge of the firing party Morant gave his gold cigarette case.

"I refuse to be bandaged," he said. "Be quick. Shoot straight. Your job's worse than mine."

"Then I refuse also," Handcock said.

A moment later the rifles rang out. The men crumpled and fell. . . .

Who, then, was Morant? Whence came he? He was said to be a member of a distinguished Naval family, though the family itself repudiated relationship. Known far and wide in Australia as a keen bush poet he contributed verses to the *Sydney Bulletin* signed "The Breaker," a name he had earned as a breaker-in of horses. In Cloncurry to this day he is known as "Warby's Morant"—a tribute to a fine friendship.

The Australians never forgave Kitchener. Their contention was that Morant, whom they were proud to regard as one of themselves, had received unendurable provocation. Kitchener is reported to have said afterwards that had all the sentences been commuted, Britain might have lost the war.

But the plain man will probably say (and with truth!) "the pity and the folly of it all! Hate and war are mad, mad taskmasters!"

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE BURNING OF BOER FARMS

#### I

PRETORIA was captured on June 5, 1901, Kruger fled to Holland, and England thought the war over. Soon after, Lord Roberts sailed for London: the returned City Imperial Volunteers marched triumphantly down Piccadilly; the people put out bunting and rejoiced. And yet—the war was by no means over. The Boers simply broke up into guerilla bands and raided in all directions, a plan which Lord Kitchener strove to counter by building block-houses, by night attacks, by surrounding the commandos, lodging women and children in concentration camps, and by bringing a much sterner note into the campaign.

The farmhouses focussed Republican resistance. In moonlight, in darkness, and sometimes in daylight, the commandos hid in them, to ride forth later rested and fed. Farmers who had laid down their arms watched British troop movements from them and informed their countrymen in the field. What then was Kitchener to do? If farm property was to be devoted to these activities and yet was to remain sacrosanct, the war might go on for ever.

#### 2

British troops, accustomed to the rules of the military manuals, had been learning a new science of war. There were spies everywhere,

even in the kraals. News spread with uncanny rapidity. There was the constant threat of ambush. In warfare of this kind the colonial troops often gave a lead in the matter of artifice. One Australian, skilled in bushcraft, riding along the open veld at night with his men, would halt from time to time to give an imitation of a crowing cock. Immediately there would arise a chorus of distant cries—cocks crowing in all directions from farms and kraals. On a clear night such sounds were audible for miles. Taking the quarter to his front from which no cries emanated, he would lead his men there, thus avoiding habitations. Such methods were obviously more suited to the Colonial than to the regular British troops, which, using guides, roads, maps and compasses, frequently walked into traps and suffered heavy losses.

## 3

But bitterness came with the burning of Boer farms. The fact that they were being used as snipers' posts or shelters for the men of the commandos was not accepted by the Republicans as an excuse for the burning. Nothing was. They felt that the Homestead—the heart and soul of Boer life—stood above the retributions of war.

Now it so happened that on many occasions Imperial troops patrolling the country between Harrismith and Bethlehem were sniped from certain mountain dongas. Men were killed. This went on until orders were given to clear the neighbourhood and to destroy a certain big white homestead. An officer was detailed to carry out the task. While, therefore, the Colonel watched from the top of the berg and saw to the shelling of the dongas which were believed to

be full of snipers, his captain proceeded with a squadron to the farmhouse about four hundred yards away. It lay right under the steep face of the berg. He rapped peremptorily at the door. It was opened. He found inside a woman weighing some sixteen stone seated in a huge chair from which she seemed incapable of rising. He explained that there was reason to believe that the house was being used to shelter snipers and that his instructions were to burn it down. He ordered her therefore to move with her two daughters to the smaller house close by (evidently the predecessor of the big homestead) while his men helped to transfer her goods to the other house.

The woman sullenly refused to go.

"I don't wish to use force!" said the officer.

No reply. Four men then lifted her in the huge chair and carried her towards the outer door. Arrived in the doorway the woman extended her hands and clutched the door frame. The men loosened the tenacious grasp and carried the woman out into the somewhat dilapidated smaller house. Next they transferred all provisions and furniture. They poured paraffin over fixtures, flooring and woodwork. Soon the big homestead was a red-yellow glow under a towering column of black smoke that drifted solemnly over the berg. All was over in a few minutes.

As the troops moved away they were fired at heavily from the dongas, a circumstance which confirmed the belief that the homestead had been a headquarters for hostile marksmen.

#### 4

Curious episodes occurred during the farm burnings. A squadron leader searched some charred farm ruins. He found the farmer's wife

living in a lean-to of corrugated iron, roughly placed against a standing wall of the burned home. She appeared in the doorway.

"Come back to-night!" she said bitterly. "You'll find my man here. Take him and I'll pray for you. He has laid down his arms. He only sleeps and eats. He has never done a hand's turn in his life. I've had to do all the work since I married him."

The squadron leader smiled. He half suspected a trap. Yet also was he impressed with the woman's sincerity. Taking suitable precautions, he returned one night and found the couple in bed. He took the man prisoner. As he was being led away the woman sat up and reviled her man:

"I'm glad they've taken you," she said, "you who should be out on commando. We want fighters, not sleepers."

Yes, the farm-burning incidents, most regrettable as they were, as indeed are all acts of war, led to enduring bitterness. Proud housewives viewed the destruction of their homes with hatred and dismay, feelings that were never really effaced. But as these acts of war led to privation the British military authorities decided to remove women and children to concentration camps; and in some instances the women doubtless invented calumnies against the conduct of the camps.

Amazing stories were told. The British were said to have mixed powdered glass with the camp food and to have poisoned the water. Absurd, of course; but repeated and believed to this day!

The truth is that the occupants of the concentration camps suffered considerably at first from typhoid in common with the combatants in the field: for less was known about prophylactics then than during the Great War, where preventive

measures against typhoid proved so wonderfully efficacious. However, the majority of the camps were kept scrupulously clean, tents were rolled up for air, daily ablutions were made compulsory, in many cases concrete baths were built. Excellent food was dispensed under military supervision: indeed the majority of camp prisoners were better fed and better off than they had ever been in their lives.

There are certain queries, the answers to which should silence for ever those who continue to vilify the British name: What did the Germans do for the women and children of devastated Belgium during the Great War? Did they supply them with food and shelter, or did they leave them to their own resources? Having regard to the usages of war, must not Britain's consideration for her enemies during the Anglo-Boer war be regarded as chivalrous to the point almost of absurdity?

## 5

Looting was strictly prohibited. But the soldiers, suffering the privations incidental to prolonged marching, sometimes succumbed to temptation. One day a certain detachment found itself near a Zeerust farm. In a very short time its members were in possession of a considerable quantity of looted provender. At that moment there was a clatter of hoofs, and to the horror of the soldiers General Douglas came galloping up. The culprits in a very sweat of terror stood up stiffly, hiding fowls, bread, jam and an odd turkey or two, behind their backs. The day was hot and the General's horse was perspiring freely. This attracted a swarm of bees. They settled on the animal and stung him so severely that he set off at a rare pace bearing the angry General on his back. When he returned the



looters had "stowed the loot," and the situation was saved!

But what of the British property owners? They also suffered. Countless homes in Johannesburg and Natal were looted. An Englishman's letter to the *Daily Chronicle* on May 31, 1900, four days after Johannesburg had been taken by Lord Roberts, stated that: "On returning to our houses in Natal we found that the best of our furniture had been taken into the Transvaal. . . . Some had been destroyed for fire purposes. Sick horses and cattle have been taken into our homes and starved to death so that they should die inside. And the terrible remains of these poor animals have floated about our doors so that the rooms cannot be used again without new woodwork.

"While we are enduring this, the Home Government says 'You shall be compensated' but we say, 'How shall we exist until that time comes?'

"And the military . . . their doings with the rebels and others simply confound us. They treat them with the utmost consideration. It curdles our blood to see this. . . . The military authorities accept surrenders everywhere without arms or ammunition. These arms are buried in secret places. And the Boers are allowed to return home to take up arms at a time that will suit them. . . . Every one of them will take up arms again when Roberts and Buller have got farther up country."

## 6

General de Wet taught the English army much. Indeed his marvellous elusiveness gave the British public an impression of almost supernatural soldiering. No matter how elaborate

the cordon, de Wet somehow got through. He escaped to places quite inaccessible to his pursuers. He describes an incident illustrative of this in his own book, "Three Years War."

"The climb became now more and more difficult; and when we had nearly reached the top of the mountain, there was a huge slab of granite as slippery as ice, and here man and horse stumbled still more. . . ."

When his burghers began to wonder whether the pursuing English would bombard them up there, de Wet pointed out that only Howitzers could reach them and that the British column was unlikely to possess such a gun.

From the mountain top they scanned the Magaliesberg Range and looked across many miles of veld to the Rand goldfields. Then they rode down the other side of the mountain—and got away.

At Tijgerfontein, his men had a fight with the British, who bombarded the Republican mountain retreat with lyddite shells. The mountain was full of baboons which sprang from cliff to cliff screaming with fear as the yellow smoke shot up. The valleys were riven with vast vibrations. On that occasion de Wet claimed to have inflicted a hundred casualties on his foes and to have suffered only two himself.

He taught the British mobility, and the art of utilising natural cover. The lessons he taught were not forgotten in the Great War. To this day, both as a man of character and a soldier, his memory deservedly endures.

7

But numbers told. In the end converging columns like so many vices squeezed the life out of Republican resistance. Louis Botha resigned

his command. Ben Viljoen took it over. He fought a last grim campaign in the mountains of the Eastern Transvaal. But even that back-to-the wall affair suffered a blow when on September 24, General Pole-Carew and his guards captured Komati Poort. Smashed and derelict Boer guns—Creusots and a Long Tom found on the border between the Transvaal and Mozambique—spoke more eloquently perhaps than anything else, of the last throes of an heroic resistance. Viljoen himself was captured on January 25, 1902.

Here and there die-hards like de Wet continued to bear down on hostile posts: but the sad heart of the Republican soldier felt the futility of it all. The blood-bespattered combatants drew off—and surveyed the ruin.

The war had cost the British 21,000 deaths and 70,000 casualties. The Boer losses will never be known. Apart from all that, however, there were other losses inherent in exacerbation of race-feeling, in the stoppage of the gold mines, the dispersal of the native labour mining force, and in damage to property through the exigencies of war and the widespread halt of industry, which can never be estimated.

Peace was signed at Vereeniging on May 31, 1902, and Lord Kitchener returned to England.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### BIRDS OF PREY

#### I

THE capital cost of the Anglo-Boer War—troops, supplies, damage to property and military operations—has been set down at £250,000,000. But the capital cost was not all the cost. Not only did the war drive a deep wedge between the races, it also brought into the country a swarm of undesirables. These entered African ports south of the Zambesi and made for the Rand goldfields, thinking of the rich booty awaiting them there. There were the bank robbers, safe-blowers, confidence men, coiners and murderers, a marauding throng which left behind it such a trail of depredation as has not yet been forgotten.

#### 2

Gold seemed to beckon them. There were thefts of it from mine battery plates: there were thefts of gold bars in transit, there were gold coin robberies from the banks, until Sir George Albū, Chairman of the General Mining and Finance Corporation, assessed the losses of the gold industry at £3,000,000 per year.

"There can be little doubt," remarked the Manager of the East Rand Proprietary Mines, in a letter to the Chamber of Mines in September, 1903, "that a gang of white thieves is engaged along the Rand in an attempt to secure gold through the medium of kaffirs employed in the mills."

The Chamber of Mines felt powerless to cope with the losses. They had become too formidable. In August 1903, the Attorney-General of the Cape wired the Attorney-General of the Transvaal: "Information received by police here to effect that considerable amounts of stolen gold in possession individuals Cape Town. Person from whom information received willing to make statement provided he received one-third value of amount recovered. Would Transvaal Government be prepared to obtain guarantee from mines?" The Chamber discussed the matter with Colonel E. M. Showers, Chief of the Transvaal Police, who said that to his knowledge 2,100 ounces of stolen gold had been sent by rail to the Cape, his informant claiming fifty per cent. as the price of full information. The Colonel urged the mining industry to consider the desirability of paying informers good rewards up to one-third of the value of all gold recovered. The Chamber circularized its mines urging the acceptance of this plan. The mines acquiesced. Andrew Trimble, the Rand and Kimberley detective, suggested the establishment of a Protection Board at £30,000 a year, with a headquarters staff of 65 private detectives and 55 native detectives. The £30,000 he claimed would save £500,000. The suggestion was not adopted.

Some of the gold thieves, however, were known and watched, notably "John the Greek" who maintained a farm for the storage of stolen gold. Occasionally they were caught.

Among the professional criminals who did things in a big way were Soldier Dave and Handsome Charlie, Wesley Colman the safe-blower from the Bermudas, whose mighty black moustache stood magnificently out in a world of lesser things; and there were the professional incendiaries, the "fire-bugs" who played havoc with the profits of the insurance companies.

Then there were those masters of the Unusual, old Daddy N——, a notorious Fagin with twenty convictions in London. He opened a most successful parlour for pickpockets in west central Johannesburg. His partner was called "The Game Chicken." Daddy N—— was kindly and patient. He would spend hours imparting the finer points of the game. An apt pupil rejoiced his soul. Artist as he was, he loved the flash of a slick finger and would shuffle along, his own fingers flickering in and out of imaginary pockets.

He did not stand alone. The gunman Ferguson broke out of jail for a week and committed thirty-six robberies in that time. His convict contemporaries were the safe-blowers, Big Liverpool, Little Liverpool and Butcher Jack, who eventually got back to Russia and became associated with Chekha. These are but a few from that great company of malefactors who made the Rand an uncertain place in the first decade after the Anglo-Boer War.

A syndicate of dynamitards once took a room over the offices of the Diamond Association of South Africa in Permanent Buildings, Johannesburg. In the safe below was sixty-thousand pounds' worth of diamonds, a circumstance with which these gentry seemed strangely familiar. A peep-hole from the road outside enabled a conscientious patrolman to look into the offices; but one night the gangsters watched him pass, quickly cut a hole in the ceiling, lowered a rope-ladder, and placed a dark green screen upon which was painted an exact replica of the safe between the safe and the peep-hole, so that when the watchman returned he would conceive himself to be looking at the real safe, not at a painted screen. In the midst of their preparations the dynamitards were somehow disturbed. They disappeared, leaving the painted screen as evidence of the con-

templated crime. The culprits were never discovered, although suspicion fell upon certain gold men known to have been abroad that night.

All the suspects have since been deported.

## 3

In 1906 Wesley Colman, gold buyer and safe-blower, found himself in urgent need of funds. His Irish friend, the mysterious B——, whose dark record gave him high rating among the bad men of the fields, was under a similar urgency. They arranged one night to dynamite a safe in the offices of the Southern Life Association in Main Street, Johannesburg, then a quarter little frequented after sundown.

They stole forth with dark lanterns and cracksmen's tools. Neither moon nor stars lightened a gloomy sky, a fact eminently favourable to professional enterprise. The two men crept into the block, which enjoyed the protection of a Zulu watchman. To a high sense of duty the Zulu added the possession of a weighty knobkerrie. But regardless of him, his 'kerrie and his conscience, the two dynamitards got into the outer yard and reached the main offices. They were working on the safe with the skill of born cracksmen, when alas, they heard an approaching footstep, stopped, listened, and as the step came nearer, began to retreat. The Zulu watchman had seen them. He chased them with the vigour of his kind. The Irishman escaped. Colman turned, fired, missed, made a flying leap at the wall: but the Zulu hurled his 'kerrie at him and hit him squarely between the shoulders, knocking him over the other side. He dropped his revolver as a result of the blow, got up, and fled into a side street, where a policeman held him.

"Don't stop me, constable," he panted, "I'm after a burglar."

"So'm I," smiled the constable.

At Marshall Square, while sitting in a comfortable chair twisting his mighty moustache and protesting violently against this outrage on a worthy citizen, Colman witnessed the disconcerting arrival of a Zulu of great girth who appeared to be inarticulate with excitement. As his faculty of speech returned and the Zulu was proceeding to speak with great vehemence, his eye fell on the now silent man in the chair. Indicating him with his 'kerrie he said: "Skellum dere baas!"

And Wesley Colman went down to the cells and subsequently to prison.

4

But now came a far worse crime. While Colman was awaiting trial, B——, his fellow cracksmen, made a bid for funds for his friend's defence. So some nights afterwards he stole across the stoep of a house in Wellington Road, Parktown, a house secluded and silent and framed with a high hedge. He crept cautiously about, flashing his torch on furniture and walls. Presently he stopped and listened. Somebody was approaching. There was a sudden monstrous silhouette in the doorway. It came gliding towards him. Instantly there was a scuffle, a flash, a report, and a heavy fall.

"My God!" groaned a voice, "I'm shot!" In the house a woman screamed.

The thin-faced man leaped out of the window, ran down the road, firing twice at a policeman who closed with him, but eventually got away leaving his cap on the path. The cap was picked up, but was never identified. The man who had been murdered was the Rand pioneer, Cummings.



A week or two later the suspected murderer got out of a coast-bound train at Heidelberg thirty miles south of Johannesburg and was walking across the platform when two men barred his way.

"Hands up!" cried one, making as if to cover him with a revolver in his pocket. The man submitted, not knowing that the revolver was a pipe. In court the case broke down.

A year elapsed. Wesley Colman of the Bermudas had been out of prison awhile and had "gone into smoke." To this course he had been wisely persuaded by his old friend and partner the thin man who had been suspected of the Cummings murder. The fact was that yet another little project of theirs had lately miscarried. One moonless night they had gone out with their tools, wet sacks, and a few sticks of dynamite. They had made their way to the ill-lit neighbourhood of a large post-office, where after cutting the window both were soon inside. They put on their gloves and looked around.

In the safe they knew was considerable wealth, the property of a Government which, they felt, deserved no consideration. They covered the safe with wet sacks, inserted dynamite and detonator in the lock, and were about to light the fuse when. . . .

"Hist!" whispered the thin-faced man whose ears were as sharp as they looked. Somebody was moving outside. They slipped away. Next morning Detective Martin found broken glass on the floor. He "painted" it. A perfect impression of a thumb and forefinger appeared. One William Passman in charge of Rand records locked himself up to study the prints. After three days he emerged triumphantly.

"I've got him, sir!" he exclaimed to the Chief of Police.

"Who?"

"Wesley Colman."

The city was combed. But there was no Colman.

One day Martin, walking through the city saw a clean-shaven man at whom he looked in some puzzlement. Then he gripped him by the arm.

"Come on, Wesley," he said.

"Wesley? You've made a mistake," said the man.

"Have I? . . . What a hell of a wind it must have been to have blown that moustache off!"

The man got five years.

## 5

A remarkable museum of crime relics has been assembled in Pretoria. Colonel I. P. de Villiers, Commissioner of South African Police, realizing the historic interest of this material, had it all sent there chiefly from the Rand.

In this museum, then, the visitor may see the coiners' retorts and moulds; a heavy brick of brass made to resemble a gold bar; schlenter diamonds, burglars' rope-ladders, masks and disguises; Fah Fee gambling devices used by the Chinese labourers imported to work on the Rand gold mines between 1904 and 1910; the chain which bound "One-Armed Mac" the notorious murderer when brought across from Australia as a fugitive from justice by Detective Mynott in the ill-fated *Waratah*; the steel hook which "One-Armed Mac" wore on the stump of his arm when sentenced to death; combinations of pistols and jack-knives; sandbags used by robbers; coats made with enormous back-flap pockets to carry stolen property; doped cigars, and a ferocious cleaver which figured in a murder case.

The relics hold up a dramatic mirror to the past; they tell a strange story of the bad man's invasion.

## 6

Even the police did not escape contamination. The so-called "Red-pepper Gang" which dynamited a score of safes in the Cape Peninsula in 1904, consisted solely of ex-policemen recruited to the force just after the war. One of its members made housebreaking implements in his spare time; another, while ostensibly on patrol, helped the housebreakers. Arrested while trying to open a safe at Paarl they sought to escape from the prison van by throwing red pepper in the eyes of their guards. There was an ex-sergeant-major, too, a veritable Kopenick, who represented himself to the Admiral of the Cape Fleet as the Commissioner of Police, and pretended also to be an officer from Cape Castle. On the strength of that he borrowed a horse, saddle and bridle, and sold them. Other rôles of his were Superintendent of the Breakwater Convict Station and official rent collector for established Peninsula house-agencies. He was caught, imprisoned and deported.

The damage done throughout South Africa by criminals in the ten years that followed the Anglo-Boer War became so serious that very wide powers to deport were taken by the Minister of Justice in 1913, powers supplemented to include a still more comprehensive list of crimes in 1914.

From 1913, deportations of undesirables proceeded at a great pace. It is estimated that in the twenty years which followed, 1,500 men and women went overseas. It is not too much to say that before they went they had cost the country in damage to health and property, in prison, court, and detective maintenance, at least £2,000,000.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### INTIMATE GLIMPSES OF OOM PAUL

#### I

**K**RUGER died on July 14, 1904 at Clarens near Vevey on the shores of Lake Geneva. No true portrait has yet been drawn of this most remarkable man whose influence persists to this day. He has either been depicted as a bigot, a mercenary, a saint or a scoundrel. But he was none of these: he was something of a political Beethoven with all that master's passion and fire. In character and determination (though not in imagination) he was the equal of Rhodes. His character, indeed, had a thousand facets, and by them all, and not by one, must he be judged.

After the Jameson Raid, his attitude was politically correct and considering the seriousness of the raid, magnanimous even. At the same time he had tempered his Cromwellian christianity with cunning and spent large sums shortly before the second Anglo-Boer War on the importation of guns which were run into Pretoria unobtrusively by night and hidden in a great secret arsenal. His forethought was certainly in great contrast to that of the British Government as has already been made clear.

#### 2

At heart he was deeply religious. He never let a Sunday pass without attending divine service. Even when he visited Barberton in 1885—despite the fact that the angry and very profane diggers had urged him to keep away—he doggedly

announced his intention of attending service at the hut of the mining commissioner. That gentleman happened to be a cleric of the Dutch Reformed Church though somewhat out of practice in the performance of the clerical office. He was much dismayed to learn that on the recommendation of David M. Wilson, Mining Commissioner of De Kaap, the President expected him to preach the sermon that morning.

The congregation consisted chiefly of the President's escort. It spread itself about the corrugated iron offices; and, after the singing of a psalm and a prayer—hymns being contrary to the tenets of the Dopper Church of which the President was a member—the congregation sat down to hear the Mining Commissioner's discourse. The reverend gentleman unrolled a yellow manuscript nervously under the ominous eye of His Honour who was an excellent judge of a sermon. It proved to be a funeral oration written many years before on the death of an aunt in the Cape Colony. Raising a shaking forefinger and pointing it at a member of the escort he thundered: "There lies the corpse with fast closed eyes!" The member of the escort who looked anything but a corpse, in fact was flushed from his exertions in a certain cattle-looting expedition which had preceded the services, emitted a loud guffaw and rushed from the room. At the end of a most melancholy discourse the President turned to Wilson who had recommended the preacher and publicly rated him for having suggested so incompetent an orator. To the end of his days the minister believed that Wilson had acted *mala fide* in the matter.

As the Bible was the President's only book—he read it constantly and little else—the great figures of Bible lore, Gabriel, the Devil and the prophets loomed largely in his thought and conversation.

The Devil even got into his smoking. Once he gave a young Afrikander who went to see him in an interval in a Raad debate—the greybeards would adjourn at times for a smoke—a pipe of strong Boer tobacco. Sitting there with Oom Paul in the ante-room the young man presently began to feel the effects of the weed.

“President,” he said in some confusion, “this tobacco’s too strong for me!”

“If that is so,” the old man replied dourly, “then you’re no Afrikander! What would you say,” he went on, “to the story of the hunter who once smoked on the banks of the Orange River? As he smoked, the Devil came up and sat down beside him. ‘Let me have a pull at your pipe,’ said he. ‘Certainly,’ said the hunter handing the Devil his gun. The Devil put the muzzle in his mouth thinking it was a pipe, and the hunter pulled the trigger. The Evil One was blown head over heels to the other side of the river. Picking himself up he shook his head, blinked, and roared out to the hunter on the other bank: ‘Verdom! but your tobacco’s stronger than Hell!’”

### 3

It was inevitable that Kruger, the autocrat of the Republic and of the great Rand goldfields, the potentate able to bestow immense concessions on his friends, should be the recipient of happy little attentions from ambitious industrialists.

The friendship of “Sammy” Marks—originally a Russian emigrant, subsequently a Transvaal capitalist with wide interests—for His Honour, was a touching thing. One day Oom Paul notified the little Jewish financier that at a certain hour he would pay him a visit at Vereeniging. Mr. Marks was much exercised at this: but having heard that on certain Royal occasions it was

customary in Europe to fire salutes of twenty-one guns, he determined to give the President a salute he would never forget. Accordingly he had a number of holes drilled in the ground which he filled with dynamite, tamped, and fitted with fuses. When His Honour rode up with his escort, he was directed between the two parallel lines of drilled holes. The fuses were forthwith ignited. Great explosions rent the air—twenty-one of them. The riven veld thundered. The President's horses, which doubtless felt that dissolution was at hand, bolted wildly over the veld, His Honour's silk hat assumed an undignified slant on the back of his head, and his face an expression of justifiable indignation.

Afterwards Mr. Marks, whose command of English was somewhat limited, had some difficulty in making clear to the President the correctness of his intentions.

In his lighter moments the grim old President was something of a practical joker. Once he summoned to his stoep the young sentry who used to march up and down outside his house. "Let me see your rifle," he said gruffly, "I want to see what sort of weapon they're giving you fellows (kerels) nowadays. Are they like the old guns, I wonder?"

The sentry handed up his rifle, whereupon Oom Paul bellowed: "Don't you know that a sentry mustn't give anybody his gun? I'll have to report you for this!"

The sentry was panic-stricken.

"Give me back my gun, please, President," he said, "and don't get me into trouble."

"When you're a sentry you mustn't give it up, even to your President," barked Oom Paul. "Don't do it again!"

The sentryman took his rifle and resumed his sentry-go, determined that no power short of death should again part him from his weapon.

It was a favourite trick of Oom Paul's when driving from town to town in his carriage to draw the driver's attention to some defect in the mule harness.

"There's something wrong with that mule there," he would say, pointing earnestly with the stem of his pipe. As the driver leaned forward the better to observe the defect, the President would burn his ear with his pipe. All new drivers were warned of this little idiosyncrasy, and thus forewarned, would look His Honour blandly in the face and say, "Yes, President, I've already noticed it."

Oom Paul was very popular with his escort of Staats Artillerymen. It invariably accompanied him on the tours he was obliged to make in various parts of South Africa, keeping his carriage clear of the mounted commandos which came out to meet him from the dorps. He called the men of the escort his children, saw to it that when halted on the veld, they had time to prepare and eat their meals, and that in the towns they visited they were properly accommodated. Moreover, he frequently sat down with them at table. All this made him vastly preferable to his rival, Commandant General Piet Joubert, who held sternly aloof from his men and rushed them from place to place.

Yes, Paul Kruger ranks to-day as one of the greatest and most picturesque figures of Africa.



## CHAPTER XXV

### GENERAL HERTZOG'S RISE TO POWER

#### I

WHEN in February, 1901, Milner was requested to undertake the administration of the Transvaal and Orange Free State which had been annexed to the British Empire, he determined to bring out from England the most brilliant young men he could find.

"There will be a great outcry about it," he told Sir Percy FitzPatrick. "There will be talk of jobs and inexperience and all that, but I believe in brains and youth. You can't get the brainy men with experience: they're too firmly entrenched in their jobs." And so he brought out his famous "Kindergarten." Among these was Geoffrey Dawson who became the brilliant editor of *The Times*, Lionel Curtis, a power behind the scenes in Imperial politics and the trusted adviser of Lloyd George in the last period of the Great War and for some time afterwards; John Buchan, subsequently distinguished alike as novelist and publicist; W. L. Hichens; Richard Feetham, now a Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa; Patrick Duncan, M.P., Minister of Mines in South Africa, and others. The striking after-success of all these officials confirms Milner as an outstanding judge of men.

They did magnificent work for South Africa during their brief *régime*.

#### 2

Rhodes declared shortly before he died on March 26, 1902, at Muizenberg, that the Afri-

kander people had not been destroyed by the War, but that Krugerism was no more. By which he meant to convey that Kruger's dream of an exclusive Dutch hegemony had been dissipated: but that the Dutch race would continue to play a worthy part in South Africa.

It is clear, however, that neither Rhodes nor Milner really foresaw the gradual waning of British influence in South Africa. Indeed, when some months before his death Milner revisited South Africa (in November, 1924), he remarked to a friend in Johannesburg: "What has become of the British spirit? I seem to hear the British name constantly decried." He put many questions to his old friends bearing particularly on the intentions of the Hertzog Government, then on the crest of a wave of nationalism; and would often shake his head sadly at their replies, saying "It was not so in my time!"

The decline of British influence really began with the departure of Lord Milner from South Africa in 1905.

When the Campbell-Bannerman government took office in Britain in 1906, it boldly announced that full self-government would be granted the Transvaal at the earliest possible moment. King Edward was doubtful if the Dutch, who were in the majority, could be depended on to exclude racial considerations from their legislation in view of the recent termination of the Anglo-Boer War; but he eventually gave his assent to the principle of responsible Government. On December 12, 1906, the new Transvaal Constitution was promulgated which provided for an Assembly of 69 members to be elected by the people, and for a Legislative Council of 15 members to be nominated by the Crown.

And thus the Milner "Kindergarten" gave way to the first Transvaal Parliament with a Dutch

majority, which fortunately preserved a liberal outlook on affairs. But while Botha and his brilliant lieutenant, Smuts, stood for race conciliation, Hertzog headed the extreme nationalists whose attitude was less tolerant.

On May 31, 1910, the South African colonies were united under the Act of Union, a momentous preliminary, it was hoped, to the fusion of the white races in South Africa. Meanwhile the influence of General Hertzog continued to increase.

### 3

On September 9, 1914, the House of Assembly at Capetown approved a motion by General Botha, the Prime Minister, identifying South Africa with Britain in the Great War. Approval of the motion meant that the Dominion would oppose the attacks being made upon her borders by the German colonists of South West Africa. The chief dissident in the House was General Hertzog who declined to believe that the Germans were seriously invading Union territory. General Hertzog's attitude reflected the views of a section of Dutch-speaking South Africans, and unfortunately also those of a powerful element in the military forces of the country, both of which were against any participation by South Africa in the World War.

General Beyers (generalissimo of the South African forces) went into rebellion. He was pursued by General Botha, and lost his life in attempting to escape over the Vaal River. The rebellion was suppressed.

The tide of nationalism continued, nevertheless, to rise.<sup>1</sup> The South African elections of

<sup>1</sup> Fewer British-born miners are employed on Transvaal gold mines to-day, than was the case before the Great War. The result of State and mining interest in silicosis and tuberculosis was the so-called miners' red ticket. Before a man could get work on the gold mines, he had to secure a red ticket certifying that he was free from phthisis. This

October, 1915, resulted in a Botha majority, with a poll of 93,374 votes against Hertzog's 78,301 (with Unionists 48,484; Labour 25,305; and Independents 12,029). But although the Botha (S.A.P.) and British (Unionist) parties amalgamated, even this did not protect the new S. A. Party, as the moderate Anglo-Dutch Party was called, from the wave of Nationalism. For when after the Red Revolt of 1922 (to be discussed in the following chapter) General Smuts, who had been made Premier, became definitely unpopular as the result of his suppression of that revolt by Martial Law, and the use of troops, the Nationalist-Labour combine (Hertzog-Creswell) defeated the South African Party (Smuts) at the polls, and in 1924 General Hertzog became Premier of South Africa.

The result was a heavy blow to British influence in South Africa since the moderate Anglo-Dutch party which had arisen out of a general desire to bring the races together, had been beaten by a more extreme Dutch party inflexibly opposed to the ideals of Milner, Rhodes, and other great workers for the expansion and integrity of the Empire overseas.

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had a striking effect on the personnel of those employed on the mines of the Rand. Hitherto, miners had been predominantly from Cornwall, Cumberland, Australia or the United States. At one time there was only one Afrikaner on one of the largest mines at Randfontein.

Then came the Great War and the red ticket.

The Great War drew a large number of the British miners away to the scene of hostilities, the red ticket prevented many of them from returning—those particularly that might have a taint of phthisis (undetected when they left). No soldier-miner dared risk a 7,000 mile journey back to the Rand, which might involve failure to get a red ticket and rejection from mine employment.

So the English miner went off to America, Australia, anywhere, indeed, but to Africa. One batch of British miners, when about to leave Redruth for the United States, was asked by a South African ex-miner, who happened to be on holiday there, why they had left out the Rand goldfields.

"We're taking no chances with the red ticket!" was the reply.

Thus the British miner from overseas has been steadily replaced by the Afrikaner (English and Dutch-speaking), and the political complexion of the workers' thought has also changed.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SIDELIGHTS ON THE 1922 RAND REVOLT

#### I

THE Red Revolt of 1922 was a Bolshevik movement. Red agents who had been in Moscow converted a widespread strike of gold and coal miners at Witbank and on the Rand into a revolution aiming at the overthrow of the South African Government and its replacement by a Soviet.

Money and wages—that began it. Both in Europe and South Africa after the Great War bank notes had been issued in unwarranted abundance. The presses of Russia and Germany had printed the rouble and mark out of existence. In South Africa something similar had happened. Too many notes had been issued, the purchasing power of South African money had fallen, and the cost of living had risen until there were ceaseless strikes and demands for cost-of-living allowances.

Wages rose. On the gold and coal mines of the Transvaal they rose. The higher miner wages bill could be met without difficulty at first, thanks to the rising price of gold. But when the gold price began to decline, an overbearing spirit had developed among the miners which became so marked that disciplinary measures against insubordinate officials proved impossible—for fear of strikes. This insubordination was part of a world reaction from war-time discipline. Moscow gave a lead in the matter. It provoked Spartacism in Germany and Communism in France

and Italy. It was behind a revolt on the Rand which all but brought down the Government of the country.

## 2

The trouble began late in 1921 when the sterling pound began to revive, that leading of course to a fall in the price of gold. With a falling gold price the gold industry was faced with the hard economic alternatives of reducing wages, or shutting down. The Rand mining houses saw before them some 20,000 white employes resolved to resist wage reductions at all costs, and a Government not unsympathetic to the men and definitely reluctant to keep order by force or by declaring of martial law. The mining houses boldly determined, therefore, to enforce wage reductions and risk the consequences. They could do nothing else.

The battle was fought to a finish. The struggle which followed was desperate and prolonged. As it progressed it became a remorseless war between the forces of ordered Government and of the Soviet, a war in which armed police exercising almost pathetic patience, were opposed by "Red" commandos, organized and drilled in platoons and battalions by officers wearing red buttons in place of the brass stars, crowns, and crossed swords of the British army. Gradually the Red revolutionaries surrounded Johannesburg. And just as it seemed that they were about to march in and murder its citizens, General Smuts declared martial law, and brought in the burghers from the countryside.

Martial law intensified feeling tenfold. The defence of Johannesburg power station became the focus of the fight—a grim and desperate affair. It had been undertaken as from January 22, by

professional members of the South African Scientific and Technical Club, who, believing that the strikers intended to plunge the town in darkness and to let the gold mines fill with water—water was rising constantly in the Village Deep, Modder East and New Klenfontein Mines—ranged themselves publicly on the side of the maintenance of essential services. Coal was brought in in circumstances of great danger into the Power Station, the engineers and other professional men of the city announcing that while politically neutral they were determined to see that lighting and sanitation were kept going.

The epic defence of the Power Station had much to do with ultimate defeat of the revolutionaries.

### 3

The great dark building, with its queer upright smoke vents like giant black cigar-holders, occupied an irregular pentagon of ground. It was very vulnerable to attack. Its yards, littered with boxes and material, would have made ideal cover for attacking forces. A thousand men could not have been certain of protecting the station from a mob of 500. Nevertheless some fifty men, among whom were Dr. A. J. Orenstein of the Rand Mines, Sir Spencer Lister, Elsdon Dew, R. Sankey (General Manager of the station), and engineers and others with stokers and machine hands, set to work dauntlessly to run the station.

The power station strikers had "downed tools" and drawn the fires. They had left the boilers cold, boasting that it would be impossible to restart the machinery without independent motor power. Hardly had they gone, however, when the engineers went in. Throughout the night they battled with the problem of starting up

the power. They were baffled—until Elsdon Dew remembered an electric emergency plant at the Corner House a thousand yards distant. The power from this plant was applied without delay and soon the city's lights were restored and the pumping plants for the sanitary services were at work. All danger of darkness and pestilence through interruption of services vanished.

Insults were hurled at the engineers. There were threats of blockade, of cutting off food supplies, of murder; with the result that some members of the engineers' party and notably the stoking staff became embittered against the "Reds" and took stern measures of defence.

An Australian mechanic charged a hose with boiling water and kept it in readiness. Others had revolvers.

One Saturday afternoon certain labour councillors presented themselves at the Power Station and demanded admission.

Dr. Orenstein interviewed them at the entrance.

"In your own interests I advise you not to come in," he said. "If you do your lives will be in danger."

"You have no right to be here," retorted one of them.

"We are here at the wish of the Government," was the reply.

"We'll see a judge and get an injunction," declared one of the councillors.

Realizing that there was only one judge in town, the late Mr. Justice Ward, and that he would be compelled in law to grant such an injunction, Dr. Orenstein rang through to Colonel Mentz, Minister of Justice in Pretoria, and told him what had happened. By some singular coincidence the Judge was not to be found thereafter, and the injunction could not be granted.



## 4

Needless to say there were many queer contests of wits. Once a revolutionary gang drove a heavy lorry at an electric standard carrying overhead wires, and knocked it over at an angle which entangled the wires and caused extensive short circuits. The whole district was plunged in darkness, a serious matter in those violent days. Dr. Orenstein and a body of Power Station officials drove out to the transformer house at Hill Township close to what is known as Schumacher's Village.

The local "reds" had been holding up motorists for days with a heavy steel chain, one end of which was attached to a tree and the other held strongly by the revolutionaries. Their practice was to pull this chain taut across the road, stopping motorists and attacking and robbing them. Dr. Orenstein who had been prepared for this, drove at the chain at high speed. The gangsters dropped it hurriedly so that the car went over it and sped on round a corner to the transformer house. There it was turned about, and the spot light directed full on the advancing "reds." While the technical men went into the transformer house to rectify matters Dr. Orenstein stood invisibly behind the spot-light, which blinded the gangsters. Revolver in hand and eyes on the menacing crowd, he presently saw a man take a rifle, mount a bicycle and drive towards him in the full glare of the light. He permitted the man to come within ten yards, then shouted:

"Ride right on or I shoot!"

The man who could not see and had evidently thought the occupants of the car to be in the transformer house, started, wobbled, but kept on.

"Right on!" ordered the inexorable voice. "Turn to your right, drop that rifle and go ahead!"

The man obeyed. Shortly after, the technical

men came tumbling out of the transformer house having rectified matters and isolated the circuit. The lights went on. Dr. Orenstein drove off in an unexpected direction thus avoiding the infuriated gang.

Brains got the better of brawn.

5

The spirit of no-quarter grew. In a tunnel drain crossing the west-central end of the city were two first-class "red" marksmen. On the gold dump of the Robinson Mine several hundred yards distant was a body of police. These had taken refuge in a small "temple" built by the makers of the film "King Solomon's Mines," a temple built to resemble the Acropolis at Zimbabwe. The snipers fired with great accuracy at the police in the temple. Every time a policeman's head appeared over the topmost steps, the snipers got him. Stern efforts were made to dislodge them.

One night a body of station defenders crept into the northern end of the tunnel, but were immediately overheard. The snipers fired shot after shot down the great tube and convinced the supporters of the Government of the improbability of getting the men that way. Then one of the snipers disappeared. The other remained.

All unknown to him a Daimler tank was rumbling down Market Street, a parallel road. Suddenly it turned and came suddenly on the open end of the drain. The gunner saw that he had the sniper at his mercy. He let fly a string of bullets, literally riddling the man where he lay.

6

Intense was the feeling just then when news reached the Power Station of the murder of Lieut. Brodigan and others in the office of the

Brakpan Mine—an atrocious crime for which a number of men were subsequently tried and acquitted on the capital charge. Mine officials and decent citizens held the crime in the utmost detestation. Such was the feeling that when after the declaration of Martial Law, the tide began to turn and Government forces to converge on the town, a body of Government men filled with thoughts of revenge set out to deal with “red” snipers on the roofs of the houses in the vicinity of the Power Station. These men had fired constantly into the station inflicting casualties. One clerk poring over a ledger under a brilliant light had a fortunate escape for a bullet struck the ledger at the very point of his pen and made a historic full-stop.

The Government troops inspired by the murdered Brodigan, a gallant ex-officer with a fine war-record, were in no mood to deal lightly with snipers. They rushed the stairways and came out on the roofs of snipers’ houses. In one case a revolutionary caught in the act of firing, showed fight. A fierce struggle took place on the roof. He was clubbed over the head, and tumbled backwards over the parapet into the street. He was killed instantly.

## 7

From all parts now came the burghers, believing the “reds” to be the representatives of the Anti-Christ of the Anti-God processions in Russia, burghers who had heard that “red” belief put white and black on a level, a principle that rankled with them as political blasphemy.

One old burgher making a house to house search for snipers in Langlaagte went somewhat nervously into a cottage. He moved through it with his bayonet at the ready until he came to a

bedroom in semi-darkness. He noticed a trace of movement and the glint of a rifle-barrel.

"*Hensop!*" (Hands up!) he cried. And there being no response, instantly fired. The bullet shattered the glass in a wardrobe. What he had seen was an indistinct reflection of himself!

Colonial troops came from Natal and from other parts of Africa: but had the burghers sided with the "reds" the day would have been lost. Fortunately the burghers stood loyally for order and the Government.

Nevertheless the loyalty of the burghers had long been doubtful. The strikers had made strenuous efforts to get them in on their side: but the mining industry had wisely told them the truth; namely, that though the majority of the mine workers were ignorant of the fact, Moscow was behind the "Red" movement. The industry made this known in pamphlets sent into the countryside. And it proved the turning point of the struggle. Afterwards, the Martial Law Inquiry Commission which sat from May 22, 1922, to inquire among other things into "the causes, circumstances, character and aims of the revolutionary movement, in which the strike culminated," took the sound view that the leading members of the Council of Action which had precipitated violence on the Rand, were communists who assumed the name "Council of Action," probably "as a blind to attract recruits who might not wish to belong to a body of avowed Communists." The Commission emphasized the fact that "at the Congress of the Third Internationale in Moscow, the South African Communist Party was affiliated, and that it is of the highest importance to understand the policy of the Third Internationale with regard to the 'subject races' in Africa, in order to appreciate the attempt which has been made and is being made, to induce the coloured as well as

the European races in Africa and elsewhere to adopt Communistic principles, and so to prepare the way for the establishment of Soviet Republics."

Striking documents calculated to influence the natives of South Africa against the Europeans were found in the Johannesburg Trades Hall during the revolt, documents addressed "To the Bantu Workers!"

The "red" policy certainly did more than anything to bring in the burghers on the side of the Government and the mines. They converged in great force on the Rand from all sides, turned the fighting definitely against the "reds" and ended the revolt.

## 8

But the revolt is chiefly remarkable for its profound reaction on subsequent national sentiment in South Africa. It led, as we have seen, to a powerful coalition between the Labour and Nationalist forces under General Hertzog, a coalition strong enough to defeat the General Smuts Government in 1924, and again in 1929 and to put Nationalism in power for a prolonged period. Dutch extremism came in on the rise of a diamond-and-prosperity boom, which enabled it to confer benefits and bestow largesse on its friends, and thus firmly to entrench itself.

Indeed, the great Rand Revolt of 1922 not only put the extreme Dutch in power, but also enthroned them for such a prolonged period as to deal a blow—some think a mortal blow—to the British imperial spirit in South Africa.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### GENERAL HERTZOG'S ANTI-STERLING POLICY

#### I

IT was Rhodes who said that the wars of the future would be economic. Can it be that this economic phase has begun in Africa?

Let us see:

When Britain went off gold in September, 1931, South Africa heard the news with consternation. The first reaction in Johannesburg—as centre of the goldfields—was an intense anxiety to know if the Rand would still be able to sell its gold, some £65,000,000 of which is now being produced yearly. Every citizen knew from the statistics published by the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, that the fate of South Africa depended on the ability of the Rand to sell.

The position soon clarified. Leaders of the gold industry declared that sales would not be affected by the changed position of the British pound, that there would be no difficulty in selling gold: indeed, that gold would continue to be the world's chief medium of exchange.

So far so good. But what would the South African Government do? Would the Premier, General Hertzog, and his Cabinet succumb to the temptation to prove their independence of Britain by:

(a) Remaining on gold, so that the South African pound would be more expensive than the British sterling pound? Or would they

(b) follow sterling and throw in their lot with the British pound seeking a parity with it?

The choice was a matter of the gravest concern to the people, for if South Africa remained on gold and so decided to be independent of sterling, she would obtain no gold premium, her exports to Britain would be at a 30 per cent. discount for they would be payable in depreciated sterling, trade with Rhodesia, which had followed sterling, would be virtually destroyed, and there would be an inevitable export of capital by speculators and merchants anxious to make a profit on exchange.

On the other hand, by throwing in South Africa's lot with sterling a premium of £20,000,000 per annum could be earned on gold, vast areas of ore of low gold content would become payable as mining ventures and could be mined for the benefit of a world badly in need of gold, trade would be preserved and capital would flow in from capitalists looking for investments, instead of being sent to Britain to be regarded as "rough" money and not wanted. It was here that the shadow of the Kruger-Rhodes duel fell across the task of making the choice.

Unfortunately, General Hertzog's anti-Imperial bias,<sup>1</sup> his desire for "economic Independence," a favourite expression of his, coupled with the advice tendered by his extreme nationalist advisers and accepted by his Minister of Finance, N. C. Havenga, led him to commit his historic blunder of remaining on gold, so that the dominion began rapidly to drift towards trade decline, unemployment and national bankruptcy. Towards the end of 1932, its financial position was desperate indeed.

The mere fact that England had gone off gold seems to have filled General Hertzog and his Cabinet with a sardonic determination to remain

<sup>1</sup> General Hertzog claims that he is not anti-British, but anti-Imperial

on, and thus to provide a wondering world with the startling spectacle of the African nation shining with the bright light of economic independence. This cherished futility, economic independence, which does not, of course, exist in any sane scheme of international trade, positively obsessed the Hertzog Government. It was an echo of the days of Kruger. It looked well: it sounded well: but it meant nothing.

There were full-dress parliamentary debates on gold. The Minister of Finance, N. C. Havenga, solemnly avowed all he knew in favour of the gold standard, but, knowing little, skilfully threw out smoke screens of word and phrase which lent a new mystery to the obscure. The Prime Minister also spoke, with an antiquated work on economics under his arm; indeed the leading debaters took part on both sides, including honest farmers from the Platteland who forsook the familiar theme of fertilizers to spill the unfamiliar dogmas of international exchange. Was it strange in the circumstances that the debates left the public with the painful impression that Parliament was very much out of its depth?

What happened? There is that facile political adage when in doubt stand by the party. And the great question of remaining on gold or going off soon degenerated into a party wrangle. The Hertzogites stood by their creed: namely, that as England was off, South Africa must stay on. If we admit, as we must, that General Hertzog and his government made the question of following sterling or remaining independent of it, a matter of party, in fact looked upon it as an opportunity of showing Great Britain that even in an economic sense South Africa was well and truly independent of her—if we admit this, then must we attribute all the suffering and loss which brought the Union, its citizens, banks and commerce to the



very verge of ruin, to a financial policy based on considerations of race rather than of reason.

## 2

To all argument in favour of following sterling the Nationalists remained inflexibly opposed. The Transvaal Chamber of Mines, Chambers of Commerce, and the best minds of the Union repeatedly condemned this Havenga-Hertzog fetish of "economic independence." General Hertzog's reply to his critics was to appoint a "packed" commission to confirm the government in its gold-standard policy. This it did dutifully. Its report left South Africa unconvinced.

By remaining obstinately on gold, however, the Hertzog Government mulcted South Africa—a small country with some 2,000,000 European inhabitants and 10,000,000 natives—in the following estimated grave losses in the course of, say, fifteen months:

Loss on exports sold abroad including gold . . . . .	£32,000,000
Loss of capital (temporary but absolute while it lasted) exported from South Africa by merchants and speculators desirous of getting the benefit of exchange . . . . .	£15,000,000
Virtual destruction of the base metal industry, with trade losses in stores purchased and wages paid . . . . .	£1,000,000

There were other losses no less serious that cannot be capitalized: but they may be indicated as follow:

Loss of trade with Rhodesia; paralysis of business enterprise within the Union through export of national capital; paralysis of South African

building trade, the funds formerly deposited with the building societies having been exported overseas by speculators in exchange; loss of tourist traffic from off-gold countries; heavy losses in the coal trade both in export and bunker sales (markets and ships finding coal priced on the basis of the South African pound too expensive); serious deficits on the national railways leading to cuts and retrenchment; steep decline in trade turnovers, with consequent unemployment, starvation, bankruptcies and broken homes.

The trade and industrial activities of the Union were reduced thirty per cent.

No equal financial blunder has ever been perpetrated in this Dominion. To justify it all in the name of "economic independence" was sufficiently unfortunate: to go on bluffing it out when the misery of the nation cried aloud for redress, was so much worse: nor can the argument advanced by some defenders of the Government that the blunder was committed in good faith, that it arose from the failure of the Cabinet to grasp currency matters, be considered exculpatory. When the directors of a business ruin it by bad management, the shareholders very properly seek to turn them out.

### 3

Towards the end of 1932, Tielman Roos, a Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa and an ex-member of the Hertzog Cabinet, resigned his judgeship to return to the political platform, to preach the gospel of going off gold and of the elimination of party strife and race hatred. He struck at the heart of the national emergency. He was everywhere acclaimed a saviour. So clamorous were his receptions that it became clear that South Africa was with him almost to a man in its

desire to follow sterling and for peace and sane Government. His action convinced the public that the Government would be forced off gold. Depositors withdrew money heavily and sent it overseas. The intention was to bring it back with the premium added. The banks, suffering under the drain of this export of capital, informed the Government that matters were becoming critical. So critical had they become on December 28, 1932, *that the South African Bank was relieved of the necessity of honouring its notes in gold*, a circumstance which automatically abrogated its agreement with the Transvaal Chamber of Mines. Under that agreement the gold industry also sold its gold to the Reserve Bank. Its abrogation left the Chamber free to sell gold wherever it liked—until a fresh agreement had been completed.

But, as the Reserve Bank no longer gave gold for its notes, South Africa was no longer on the gold standard.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE RAID ON GOLD PROFITS

#### I

THE effect on the Union Government of this forced abandonment of gold was striking. The Prime Minister, General Hertzog, at once published the following dramatic New Year's "greeting":

"The enemies of our people and our country are for the moment triumphant. Organized finance, assisted by Afrikaner treason, has forced South Africa off the gold standard. . . . The deep wound of public humiliation, of national disunion, and moral destruction done to our land and country by malicious conspiracy and treason will create in more than one of us a feeling of doubt if not despair in regard to the future of our nation."

Havenga, Minister of Finance, said:

"It is estimated that in this run on the banks for remittances to England between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 left the country in three days. It was clear to anyone with the least comprehension of the position that within days, possibly hours, of the re-opening on Wednesday the banks would have had to close their doors. The withdrawals would have been of a volume beyond the capacity of the three commercial banks, and would have involved in the same proportion the building societies and every other financial institution in the country. The only way to prevent a financial disaster of the first magnitude was to release the Reserve Bank from its liability to redeem its

notes in gold, thereby *ipso facto* detaching the currency of our country from the gold standard."

The attitude of the Nationalist Cabinet was full of resentment. Dr. Malan and General Kemp resented no less than General Hertzog and Havenga the determination of the nation to follow Britain and to get off gold. Havenga indeed remarked that departure from gold was "an act such as no country can take with credit and honour."

The prophecies of the Nationalists as to the disasters which would certainly befall South Africa if she abandoned gold—prophecies based on failure to understand the true function of gold in the scheme of world currency—were speedily falsified. To the amazement of General Hertzog and the political dullards looking at the goldfields over their little garden wall from Pretoria, there was talk of a boom, of expansion on the goldfields, of bigger markets, and of better days for the farmers.

Obviously the rise in the price of gold from 84s. 9d. an ounce to 120s. an ounce meant a boom in kaffirs. The world, long starved for reliable investments, saw the Rand suddenly as a new field of opportunity. On the Rand itself the higher price of gold brought vast areas of low grade ore, hitherto unpayable and therefore not worked, into the pay zone. Mines that for years had had to mine only their richest ore and so to "pick the eyes" of their workings, now found their lower grade rock worth mining. A great era of expansion loomed ahead.

The boom came. Then, with the excitement at its height and gold-bearing farms being taken up everywhere along the Reef extensions of the goldfields, John Martin, as President of the Chamber of Mines, made an important public statement on January 11, 1933, at a special meeting of the Chamber.

As the official head and representative of the greatest gold industry in the world, he declared that if the Government would reject any short-sighted taxation having a confiscatory tendency, then the Union's departure from gold would not mean merely some temporary benefit or stimulus to the gold mining industry, it would make possible far-reaching improvements in operating results, expansion of scope, and the extension of the life of the industry as a whole. He drew attention to the fact that:

*"South Africa never in the past appeared to be sufficiently impressed with the startling progressive decline of the gold mining industry under the old conditions (with South Africa on gold at only 84s. 9d. per ounce). The official Government estimate was that by 1943 the gold output would be £20,000,000 or much less than half the present output, and that by 1948 it would amount to only £10,000,000 or less than a quarter of the current yearly production."*<sup>1</sup>

John Martin's address went on to indicate that it would be the aim of the mining houses to earmark some part of the bigger profits obtainable under the higher 1933 gold price for big schemes of mining provided taxation was not confiscatory, so that the life of the Rand might be prolonged, and that it might go on doing its invaluable work for South Africa and the world.

2

How did the Government react to all this?

Disturbed by the destruction of its theories by the turn of events, the Hertzog cabinet reconsidered matters. From the first it seemed to be dominated by the feeling that the profit deriving from the increased price of gold belonged in

<sup>1</sup> Also based, of course, on the old price of 84s. 9d. per ounce.

equity to the State rather than to the shareholders of the companies. The share of the profits it intended to take, its taxation policy, were, however, kept a closely guarded secret. It was decided to let it be known that the Government would deal sympathetically with the Rand, would tax it lightly so that its life might be prolonged. It has been held in some quarters that there was a deliberate intention here to deceive;<sup>1</sup> in others, that there was no such intention, but that from the first the views of the Government and mining companies were radically divergent, the Government holding bona fide that the extra profits belonged to the State; the mining companies deeming them the property of their shareholders but admitting that some extra taxation was justified. Obviously, such divergent views between Government and mines permitted vastly different conceptions of what was generous taxation.

In February, 1933, the mines declared their monthly profits. The soaring figures were intended to prove to the world that here were magnificent mining investments. London and Paris rushed to buy. Capitalists looked to the Rand goldfields, quietly impressed by the new picture of expansion and profit. The Rand's clerks, typists, widows and other humble folk also put their mites into the sharemarket: as did the wealthy men.

Meanwhile the Nationalists kept their closely guarded secret. The state of agriculture, ruined through drought and the Government's determination in 1932 to keep on gold (so that the farmers had been paid for their exports in depreciated sterling<sup>2</sup>) strengthened the Govern-

<sup>1</sup> It is now generally recognized that there was no deliberate intention on the part of the Hertzog Government to deceive: but that an inherent deception lay in the gulf between the Government's conception of light taxation and that of the mining companies.

<sup>2</sup> It is only right to mention that the South African farmer would still have been prejudiced, even had South Africa been off gold in 1932, by the sharp disorganization of the world's wool and maize markets.

ment's determination to transfer the greater part of the excess profits of the mines—profits sorely needed for the expansion of the gold mining industry—to the farmers to get them out of the mess in which they found themselves. Their troubles, it is necessary to repeat, had been due to no small extent to the Government's incompetent financial policy.

## 3

Everything played into the hands of the Government. The people, as we have seen, were tired of party wrangling and eager for peace. They wanted General Hertzog as leader of the Nationalists and General Smuts as leader of the South African Party (the non-racial British and Dutch party) to reconcile their differences and to work for better days. The demand for coalition, for peace and fair play for all, voiced at first so effectively by Mr. Tielman Roos towards the end of 1932, grew; and after stormy negotiation, coalition was brought about early in 1933. It was decided that there should be a coalition Government with General Hertzog as Prime Minister and General Smuts as one of his Cabinet, and with a programme which must put country before party. A wave of hope swept the country when the new Coalition Government took office in May, 1933.

With amazing trust, General Smuts and his cabinet followers accepted without adequate examination the complicated Nationalist taxation formula, satisfied apparently to regard it as a fulfilment of the promise of light taxation. Even *Die Burger*, generally regarded as a Nationalist organ "in the know," contributed to the sense of false security by declaring under the scathing heading "Hoggenheimer Rejoices" that the Government would take "only two or three millions more than



would naturally accrue." The Governor-General's speech, too, delivered on May 26, declared, "My ministers propose to submit to you legislation which, while providing for a part of the additional profits accruing to the mining companies being appropriated by the State for the general welfare of the community, will at the same time enable and encourage the industry to devote a substantial portion to its expansion, more especially to the working of low-grade ore, thereby affording increased employment."

Lulled by these assurances, the investor continued to buy while share prices rose. Then some days later came the Budget speech.

To state that it created consternation is to put the matter lightly. It led to a market panic. In a letter to the Minister of Mines, members of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange told him bluntly that many people had been ruined—as indeed they had. They bitterly blamed the Government for concealing its intentions and permitting share prices to become inflated.

The Government's scheme, it was found, took £15,000,000 from the mines out of a total annual general profit of £30,000,000; or 68 per cent. of the *extra* profits which had accrued to the mines as a result of the higher price of gold. Taxation which appropriates 50 per cent. of the profits of any industry must be deemed confiscatory—and the 1933 Havenga budget was definitely confiscatory. It was conceived by a rural-minded Cabinet with all the inability of the rural mind to look sympathetically at the town. It was an echo of the old Kruger-Rhodes cleavage.

Admittedly the price of gold may rise again. That would be a lucky fortuitous circumstance. And in that event the Government's staggering taxation should be less felt. On the other hand, another big increase in the gold price might

occasion a rise in living costs with subsequent embarrassment to the industry.

While, therefore, the future is uncertain, certain facts emerge clearly—namely, the unfortunate character of the Havenga taxation of 1933 and its tendency to limit the mining of lower grade ore, and thus to limit the life of the mines.

Such then is the story of Havenga's 1933 raid on the Rand. Sir George Albu described it on June 20, in his speech as Chairman of the General Mining and Finance Corporation, as the biggest mistake made by any Government in his 57 years of experience in South Africa. Certainly in its failure to make proper provision for a substantial extension of the life of the gold mining industry it dealt a blow at that wider world whose currencies depend on adequate future supplies of gold. For unless that gold is forthcoming regularly and for many years, the ever-growing shortage which has been prophesied by the experts of the League of Nations will jeopardize the future of gold itself, and will thus dislocate the currencies of the world.

"The wars of the future will be economic wars," said Rhodes. Can it be that the 1933 Havenga budget is an expression of that truth? \*

\* This chapter and the one preceding it have not been written in any provocative spirit, but rather in support of a plea for a handsomer and less sectarian attitude by the Nationalists towards the Rand goldfields and the urban areas

As this book goes to press the price of gold stands at over 124s. an ounce with every likelihood of a further substantial rise. This most fortunate circumstance—unforeseen by the Hertzog government—has to some extent nullified the effect of the government's drastic taxation of the gold mines. At the increasing gold price the mines are in a steadily improving position, notwithstanding taxation. As the government's declared policy was to take as large a slice of mine profits as possible, while the premium lasted (the government had no faith in a permanently higher price for gold) it would be wrong to give the government undue credit for the fortunate situation in which the mines and the country find themselves as a result of a rise in price which looks like being permanent.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE YELLOW MAN LOOKS AT AFRICA

#### I

RACE hatred in South Africa—or what?  
That is the question.

Is it unreasonable to contend that unless British and Dutch drop their wrangling, their bitter talk about race and language, they may one day be faced with peril from without—the peril of invasion? That in some vague way the Defence authorities of the Union have foreseen danger is indicated by the existence of complete plans in Pretoria to resist it. If the Union cuts adrift from the Empire, flouts the British connexion, hauls down the British Flag, establishes all-Afrikaans universities from which all that is British has been cast out—if the Nationalists continue to persist in regarding the British connexion as undesirable and Britons as aliens, they may achieve an independence of the British Commonwealth of nations which will also carry forfeiture of right to the protection of the British Navy. Obviously it would be almost impossible for the British Navy to stand aside if her interests in South Africa were assailed by a foreign power. But assuming that the Navy did stand aside, or were defeated in a great sea battle by the Japanese, South Africa, the treasure-house of the world, would then be utterly at the mercy of the victorious invader.

#### 2

The treasures of Africa have certainly not escaped notice in the Far East. The Rand, which

is 350 miles inland from the coast, is a vast sunken bowl of gold. Less than half its contents have been mined after some fifty years. At one time probably the golden bowl was a lake fed by a wide river which discharged into the lake through a delta. The waters of that river held gold, and gold was constantly deposited on the bed of the lake, so that it made a golden lake bed. After countless years the lake dried up: the basin filled with eroded earth, and the land to the north of it rose ominously higher and higher under volcanic pressure. But the buried bowl remained as ever sunken far into the earth, its rims peeping out, a mighty gift of God to whomsoever should find it. Its content to-day is beyond price. Men have mined down one side of it and seem to have found a flattening of the reef as they have gone; they seem to be getting near the bottom of the bowl: but they may have to mine many a mile yet along the golden way before reaching the reverse slope up the other side. It was the northern lip of the bowl incidentally that George Walker found in 1886.

And the value of it? Who can say? The world wants gold, needs it more than ever, for it is the only metal men trust in days of calamity. The greater the calamity the stronger the position of gold. It will always be wanted, for there is nothing to replace it. As time passes it should tend to rise in value.

To-day the gold stocks of the earth are probably £6,000 millions sterling at the new gold price. The gold taken from the Rand is probably £1,600 millions at the new gold price, that is to say, the

\* The following facts concerning the value of the South African goldfields are worth noting. In the first quarter of the present century, South Africa was the leading pioneer with 42 per cent. of world's output. To-day, South Africa produces more than half the world's output. It actually produces in a single day 36,000 fine ounces, which, if presentable as a solid bar, would be 46 inches long, would weigh 2,400 pounds avoirdupois, and would be worth at 120/- per ounce, £216,000!

Rand has supplied a substantial part of all the gold in the world. And as matters stand, namely, with gold at a permanently higher price, there is probably between £2,000 millions and £3,000 millions in the bowl still awaiting extraction.

But the story does not end here: all Africa is full of gold. Rhodesia's mountains and plains are veined with it; the Transvaal is full of it; the Free State has a share of it; and one day when the price of gold again rises, as it should with the need for more money in the world, it will pay to work whole regions at present deemed too poor, the gold being thinly scattered through its rock. "Africa is full of gold, crammed, undershot with it," was one of the last utterances of Fred Struben the discoverer of the Rand conglomerates.

### 3

Even that is not all. The desert coasts of South West Africa are treasure coasts. They are strewn with diamonds brought down by rivers and cast back by the waves. Precious stones have been recovered from the sands, from old oyster beds, from dunes and rocks and caves in staggering profusion. Southern Africa could supply twenty times the present world demand for diamonds. New diamondiferous craters, new fields, await discovery, but the Union Government, knowing the limitation of the world's capacity to absorb, does not desire these discoveries to be made.

Vast deposits of copper, coal, iron and platinum have been proved and mined. There has been no end to the bounty of nature. And so it would not be unreasonable to ask if all this dazzling treasure has escaped the notice of a power such as Japan, overcrowded, poor, and land-hungry as she is, and determined to find space for her surplus people. There is nothing more certain than

that Japan, under the urge of sharp necessity, must get more land. Indeed, in 1933, the children of Tokio were being taught to visualize a Japan expanding her influence over successive circles, each a thousand miles wider every ten years!

## 4

The lands of the Yellow men are the most crowded on earth. Africa is among the least crowded.

Africa, with some of the richest territory in the world, has a general all-over population average of only 12.85 per square mile. The average for Northern Africa, including the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Abyssinia, Liberia, and the Sahara and Libyan deserts, is 11.284 per square mile; in Central Africa 15.330 per square mile; and in Southern Africa, including the Union, South-West Africa, Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland, 8.36 per square mile—giving an all-over Africa average of 12.85. The all-over average in Europe, including Soviet Russia, is 112.94 per square mile, with a surplus population, according to Joseph Caillaux, former Prime Minister of France, of 150,000,000. In other words Europe is nine times as densely populated as Africa. The United Kingdom has thirty-seven times more people to the square mile than Africa.

The average population density per square mile in the most thickly-peopled centres of Europe are: Belgium 696 to the square mile; United Kingdom, 488 per square mile; Italy 346 per square mile; France, 190 per square mile; Portugal, 167 per square mile; and Spain, 117 per square mile.

Now let us look at Asia. What do we find there? Vast communities where the population pressure is enormous. China has 350,000,000 inhabitants; and in the Chinese province of Shan-

Tung (nearly as big as England) there are 700 to the square mile. In the central Chinese provinces the density varies from 500 to 350 per square mile. In India and Burmah there are 350,000,000 inhabitants with a population density about equal to that of France (190 per square mile) while Japan proper has probably 400 to the square mile and a population of 66,000,000. The position of Japan is made worse by the restricted area of her arable soil.

Thus out East the struggle for life is bitter indeed. There are immense populations constantly on the verge of starvation. China is cultivated almost up to the snow line. India is no less congested. Already a considerable community of Indians has settled on the East African coasts, creating serious political problems in Natal and Kenya; and there is constantly increasing pressure from India for bigger political privileges in Africa for her nationals, so that white interests may eventually be submerged.

It is idle to expect that Japan will settle the problem of her surplus population in crowded Manchuria or China proper. The Chinese—rapidly becoming nation conscious—will have the final word as to that. Australia will not have Japanese: the islands of the Pacific have been partitioned between the powers, affording limited opportunity for Japanese settlement: America will not have the Japanese, nor will South Africa.

Yet Japan *must* have territory.

## 5

Let us consider the possibility of conquest of territory by force of arms.

Before Japan attempted to seize territory in which Britain was interested she would be bound by certain strategical considerations. The most

important of these would be the protection of her own trade with Northern China on which her food supplies so largely depend. Once those supplies were cut off the defeat of Japan would be inevitable. To protect that trade therefore, she has to-day (1933) a navy which is the third largest in the world. The following are the proportionate figures of the three leading navies, as they will be in 1936: Britain 11, United States 11, Japan 7.

Japan is thus fairly well equipped to deal with any naval menace to her own trade with north China. But in the event of war with Great Britain she would probably try to make an early end of the menace to that trade by destroying British naval power in the East, and the first step towards it would be to attack the British naval base at Hong Kong.

Britain has two important naval bases in the Far East—Hong Kong with its shore batteries and the much larger unfinished base at Singapore, 2,000 miles to the south. From the latter Britain hopes to safeguard Australia from the territorial ambitions of the Japanese.\*

Now Hong Kong as a base is by no means so well-equipped as Singapore. And, in the event of a resolute naval attack on Hong Kong by the Japanese it is possible that it would be taken. This would be a British disaster of the first magnitude, for it would provide the yellow man with a wonderful base from which not only to protect his own north Chinese trade, but also to harry British trade afloat in the East.

The value of British trade afloat on any one day in the East was estimated by Brigadier General Anderson in 1929 as follows: Within the Indian

\* Early in July, 1933, the correspondent of *The Times* at Melbourne stated that although the Dean of Canterbury's proposal to give the northern territory of Australia to Japan has been unanimously condemned, yet it has caused a revival of interest in the problem of using the territory.



area £81,000,000; within the Australian zone £51,000,000, and within the Chinese zone £26,000,000, a total of £158,000,000, dependent for protection solely on the cruiser squadrons in the East Indies and China, and on the Australian and New Zealand navies.

Assume now that the Japanese navy with the advantage of proximity to its own bases, decided to risk a general engagement with the British fleet, a battle to the finish. If as a result of Mr. Macdonald's disarmament policy the weakened British fleet were defeated and destroyed, then obviously the whole of the British trade afloat and her territorial possessions in the East would be at the mercy of the victors. The fate of Australia might then be decided by the peace terms; or if no satisfactory terms of peace were forthcoming, the Japanese might land troops in Australia, and subsequently in Southern Africa, where they would seize regions eminently suitable for Japanese settlement. The Japanese farmer it is claimed would be capable of cultivating the sub-tropical regions of Northern Queensland and the African Karroo in numbers and with success.

Students of these problems would do well to read the arguments advanced by Captain Bernard Acworth in his excellent "Navies of To-day and To-morrow." He boldly declared that the vast sums expended on Singapore have been a mistake—that base being too far to the south of probable naval Anglo-Japanese fighting—that the base on which Britain should have relied is Hong Kong, on the flank of the north China-Japan shipping route, and closer to where decisive naval actions might be fought. He contends that the Japanese would never seize Australia by force, but might seek a decisive naval victory over Britain which would enable them to include Australia as a pawn in the dictated peace terms.

## 6

The United States with her great powers of trade boycott, is a vital restraint on a potentially belligerent Japan. The Japanese would hesitate to risk a war in which Britain and the United States were allied against them; indeed they would avoid almost at all costs a conflict with the United States, if only by reason of the extreme importance of their American market. It is perhaps fortunate for Japan that there is so little identity of interest as between Britain and the United States in the Pacific. Japanese diplomacy will certainly aim at keeping the two powers apart, while dealing in the first place with Soviet Russia, and consolidating her newly acquired territory in China and Manchuria.

## 7

In 1927 a representative of the *Star* newspaper (Johannesburg) returned from Japan with the information that "an early investigation into the possibilities of successful negotiation with the Government of the Union of South Africa in respect of the admission of Japanese settlers on a large scale is advocated by the Japanese Bureau of Population and Food Investigation."

The correspondent added: "As one year succeeds another in Japan the national problem of the solution of the population question becomes more pressing and takes up more attention from statesmen and economists, for during the past 20 years the huge increase in the birth rate, coupled with the difficulty of procuring foodstuffs to feed them, has become a menace of first magnitude. The real significance of the situation in this respect is now gradually becoming known

amongst the masses of the people in the Japanese Islands, and of late it has been noticed that the vernacular Press has been giving a deal of space to the discussion of methods of dealing with the situation. With a population of over 66,000,000 and a yearly increase of about a million souls it is generally conceded that the breaking point will have arrived in 20 years' time. Just what the breaking point will be or will mean in this part of the world cannot yet be visualized, but it is certain that if the population keeps on increasing at the present rate and no solution be found for the problems involved, that some movement of great national importance and significance will take place. Then it will be either life or death for Japan, and there is nothing in the past history of this nation to lead the world to think that she will go under without a terrific struggle."

## 8

On July 7, 1931, the *Rand Daily Mail*, the leading morning organ on the Rand goldfields, made the startling announcement that secret negotiations had been set afoot in Johannesburg on behalf of Japanese interests, for the purchase by the Japanese of a ranch on the Natal-Swaziland border, a ranch covering 267 square miles. The negotiations, it was stated, were being pursued by Capetown agents who had received cabled instructions from Japan. These agents "refused to be interviewed and had expressed anxiety at the object of their visit becoming known."

The land on which the Japanese had designs was the Bar R. Ranch in the fertile Usutu Valley of Swaziland. It is situated 70 miles from Mbabane, the Swazi capital. The negotiations aimed at the private purchase of the ranch which

in extent is greater than the two European republics of Andorra and San Marino and four times the size of the Principalities of Lichtenstein and Monaco together.

It was estimated that the estate would support 80,000 Japanese cotton growers and others. It had 120,000 acres under cotton, and the rest of the ranch, it was said, could be made to produce maize, sugar and tobacco.

Exposure in the South African Press led to early abandonment of the negotiations, for it was pointed out under Law 3 of 1885, that the acquisition of land by Asiatics was prohibited, a prohibition made specifically applicable to Swaziland in 1907.

What then is the best guaranty, nay, the only guaranty of the security of our African coasts? The British fleet. It behoves Southern Africa to remember that. The fact is commonly forgotten that had Admiral Sturdee not defeated and sunk the German cruisers under Von Spee off the Falkland Isles in the Great War, the German admiral would have bombarded the coastal ports of South Africa and laid them low. He would also have seized the vast amount of gold at that time lying in the vaults of the Banks awaiting transport to England.

If the European is to remain dominant in Africa, he must stop his bickering and see that the doors of his house are in order. All men, all nations, all Empires are the slaves of economic laws. These are pressing more heavily on the Yellow Man than on any other. He is starving for land. He must get more. Where will he get it?

In a world where Time is annihilating space Africa beckons him. . . .

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE JAPANESE SCHEME OF WORLD CONQUEST

#### I

THE Japanese are strangers to fear. Lord Lytton, chief signator to the report which caused the Japanese to secede from the League of Nations, has described how three fearless Japanese soldiers at Shanghai, determined to break through a barbed wire entanglement which had escaped disruptive shell and machine-gun fire, swathed themselves in dynamite, lay down in the wire and exploded themselves, the wire being blown in all directions. Their companions then went through the breach.

Courage of this kind is irresistible. What western army could withstand it. The westerner with his smaller degree of fatalism, his greater love of life and higher imaginativeness, is liable to "break" after prolonged and persistent gunfire, and after the sight of violent death everywhere on the battlefield. Not so the Japanese. He regards death for his country and Emperor, descended as he believes him to be from God, as an enviable distinction.

Japan as we have seen must have new territory or die. No thought of the extinction of Japan is entertained by the Mikado's subjects. Their armies have already conquered great tracts of territory. Their soldiers are still ready to die to a man. Any attempt to coerce Japan into compliance with the pro-Chinese sentiment of the Lytton report, would probably lead to a world war.

Now in November, 1932, the League of Nations by 19 votes to one disapproved of the action of Japan in invading Manchukuo. The Chinese delegates meanwhile distributed in the Council Chamber of the League a pamphlet entitled "Japan and the Next World War," which purported to be a copy of a memorial presented to the Emperor of Japan on July 25, 1927, by General Tanaka, the Japanese Premier.

The document states that from June 27 to July 7, 1927, a special conference was held of all civil and military (Japanese) officers connected with Manchuria and Mongolia, and that it was their discussions which had resulted in the formulation of the Plan.

## 2

What then is this plan? It is a 15,000 word document, the essence of which is embodied in the following quaintly worded extracts:

(a) "If, we, the Japanese want to control China, we must first crush the United States just as in the past we had to fight the Russo-Japanese war. But in order to conquer China we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world we must first conquer China. If we succeed in conquering China, the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will surrender to us. Then the world will realize that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare to violate our rights. This is the plan left us by Emperor Meiji, the success of which is essential to our national existence.

(b) "The Nine-Power Treaty (guaranteeing the integrity of China) is merely an expression of European commercial rivalry. It was the intention of England and America to crush our influence in China with the power of their wealth. The

proposed reduction of armaments is nothing but a means to limit our military strength, making it impossible for us to conquer the vast territory of China. On the other hand, China's sources of wealth will be entirely at their disposal. It is merely a scheme by which England and America may defeat our plans. . . . England . . . has India and Australia to supply her with foodstuffs and other materials: America (has) South America and Canada to supply her needs. Their spare energy could be entirely devoted to developing trade in China to enrich themselves. But Japan's food supplies and raw materials decrease in proportion to her population. If we merely hope to develop trade we shall be defeated by England and America which possess unsurpassable capital power. . . . When we remember that the Chinese are our sole customers, we must beware lest one day when China becomes unified and her industries prosperous, Americans and Europeans will compete with us. Our trade in China will be ruined. Minseito's proposal to uphold the Nine-Power Treaty and to adopt the policy towards Manchuria of trade (alone as apart from conquest) is nothing less than national suicide.

(c) "The way to gain actual rights in Manchuria and Mongolia is to use this region as a base and under the pretence of trade and commerce to penetrate the rest of China. Armed by the rights already secured we shall seize resources all over the country. Having China's entire resources at our disposal we shall proceed to conquer India, the 'Archipelago Asia Minor,' Central Asia, and even Europe. But to get control of Manchuria and Mongolia is the first step if the Yamato race wishes to distinguish itself in Continental Asia. Final success belongs to the country having the food supply; industrial prosperity belongs to the country having the raw

material; the full growth of national strength belongs to the country having extensive territory. If we pursue a positive policy to enlarge our rights in Manchuria and China, all these pre-requisites of a powerful nation will constitute no problem. Furthermore our surplus population of 700,000 each year will also be taken care of. If we wish . . . to secure the permanent prosperity of our Empire, a positive policy towards Manchuria and Mongolia is the only way."

## 3

The following significant comment is made in the Tanaka memorial plan concerning Japan's gold policy.

"The Government Bank of the Three Eastern Provinces (Manchuria), the Bank of Communications, the Frontier Development Bank and the General Credit and Finance Corporation, have in circulation silver notes amounting to 38,000,000 dollars. Their reserve funds in the form of buildings and goods are estimated at 1,350,000 dollars. It is natural that the Chinese notes should depreciate. . . . Until we have entirely discredited the Chinese silver notes, we will never place our gold notes in their proper place in Manchuria and Mongolia. . . . We must overthrow Manchuria's inconvertible silver notes and divest the Government of its purchasing power. Then we can extend the use of our gold notes in the hope of domesticating the economic and financial activities of Manchuria and Mongolia . . . . If the gold standard is adopted we can issue gold notes freely."

These, then, coupled with a detailed discussion of the competitive and strategic railways of Manchuria (in which the Japanese perceive in



Soviet Russia another enemy) are the main features of the plan.

The Japanese delegate Matsuoka stood up at Geneva and denounced the Tanaka Plan as a forgery: whereupon Dr. Wellington Koo, the Chinese delegate, retorted that it was certainly not written by a Chinaman, that its author must have been a Japanese, and that the state of affairs in Manchuria *where the plan was actually being carried out* was the best answer as to its authenticity. It would be necessary to have access to the Imperial archives at Tokio, he concluded, in order to verify or disprove the document.

## 4

Although Africa is not specifically mentioned in the plan, it must be remembered that the plan was only conceived in 1927, and that since then Africa has come prominently under Japanese notice. Japanese trade commissions have visited the Union: and the so-called "gentleman's agreement" has been ratified by Japan and the Union Government, the agreement being a friendly but as some think wholly mistaken gesture, designed to open the door to Japanese trade in the hope that the Japanese will buy South African wool.

On October 16, 1930, the Union's Acting Secretary for External Affairs wrote to Yamasaki, Acting Consul for Japan in Capetown, agreeing to admit temporarily to South Africa, Japanese students, tourists and merchants, under one-year permits renewable for a further period or periods of one year.

This evoked a storm of protest of Parliament and Press. General Smuts declared in Parliament on March 3, 1931, that this Japanese agreement was a precedent, and that if China or other countries wanted the same privilege, South Africa

would have to give it them. "Our trade relations with Asia," he declared, "could grow very large indeed. Trade will be deflected from the West to the East. . . . It will be quite impossible to keep out Asiatic immigrants once we had very large trade relations with the East."

Chambers of Commerce bitterly denounced the agreement all over South Africa and the secrecy with which negotiations had been conducted—the National Party caucus knowing nothing about it until it had been signed and sealed—aroused violent opposition. The *Cape Times* declared that "even if South Africa were wholly white there would still be adequate reasons for maintaining the policy of Asiatic exclusion which the Union has deliberately followed since its foundation." The extent of public feeling aroused in South Africa was shown by the fact that protests were lodged by the Chambers of Commerce of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Standerton, in the Transvaal; of Cape Town, Kimberley, East London, Port Elizabeth and Worcester in the Cape; of Bloemfontein, Kopjes and Kroonstad in the Orange Free State; and of Durban, Newcastle and Pietermaritzburg in Natal.

## 5

One of the first effects of this agreement was the flooding of Union markets with Japanese goods.<sup>1</sup> One large South African firm gave an order to Japan for 50,000 pairs of rubber tennis shoes to be landed in South Africa at 9d per pair. The London *Daily Mail* said: "The prices are such that the English manufacturer has no chance of competing."

<sup>1</sup> In July, 1933, the Yen had been lowered in value, and South Africa was being flooded with Japanese goods at prices with which no European could compete.

The South African Government became alarmed. It imposed a substantial duty on each pair of shoes. Under the Ottawa Conference certain South African preferences were granted on silk and cotton goods which put Manchester on the competitive map.

The fear that the Japanese would establish a ring of wholesale houses in South Africa was not justified: on the other hand, Japan has not taken the big quantities of South African wool anticipated: she has been able to purchase wool so much more cheaply from Australia, where a sharply depreciated money pound has put that country in an unassailable position.

Nevertheless, South Africa, its goldfields, its coal mines and iron fields, its vast unoccupied spaces—have all come prominently under official Japanese notice of recent years. There has even been talk of a South African exhibition in Japan.

The little island power, moving slowly, has conquered Manchuria and is invading China—the first steps laid down in the Plan. Time changes maps and frontiers, annihilates space and enhances the efficiency of the machine. Time is the biggest factor of all.

Who shall say, then, that the little Yellow Men of the East will not in the process of time strike at the rich mineral fields of Africa, and those vast sparsely populated territories which might settle for ever the problem of a surplus population amounting to 700,000 a year? Japan's territorial quests will never end with the conquest of an overcrowded Manchuria or China. She must look farther afield. The Anglo-Dutch feud in South Africa prolonged for a hundred years is a direct incitement to her to do so.

Time passes. The spirit of conflict remains. We continue our enmities, our partisan legisla-

tion, our language intolerance and confiscatory taxation. We have become unjust stewards of a vast heritage. We are as a House divided.

Meanwhile, from the overcrowded islands of the East, from the land of the rising sun, formidable, eager and sinister, the Yellow Man looks on. . . .



## EPILOGUE

Give peace in our time!  
Surcease from battle and death, in the trench  
    mire,  
From nations in bondage, with yoke, and with  
    goad:  
Lord of all manhood! Silence the gun-fire,  
Turn back the hosts on the long road,  
We pray Thee, O God!

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*

We pray Thee for peace!  
Peace in the senates: no wise man despising  
The Past, and the precepts it held for him  
    then.  
At the sun's going down and the morrow's  
    uprising,  
Send us new prophets, kind hearts, braver  
    men,  
We pray Thee, O God!



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